

Israeli jet raids Palestinian base south of Beirut

SIDON (AFP) — An Israeli warplane Monday fired missiles at a Palestinian guerrilla base dug into a hill south of Beirut, security sources said. The jet targeted Naameh hill, only 15 kilometres south of the Lebanese capital, where the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) is based, said the sources. There were no immediate details on casualties or damage. Israeli jets fired a barrage of missiles at Naameh last Friday, inflicting no casualties but sparking fires in the region. Israel also raided the base on Aug. 8 and July 3, when four PFLP-GC fighters were wounded. The PFLP-GC, led by Ahmad Jibril, rejects the peace accords signed by PLO with Israel.

Jordan Times

An independent political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية الراية

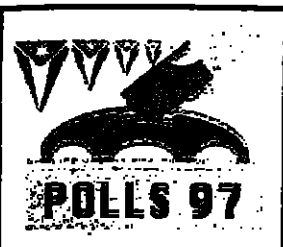
Hizbollah offers to trade Israeli remains for prisoners

TEHRAN (AFP) — The leader of the Lebanese Hizbollah movement, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, offered here Monday to exchange the remains of Israeli soldiers recently killed in Lebanon for Lebanese in Israeli prisons. "We are ready to proceed with the exchange of Israeli corpses for our prisoners in Israel," the leader of Hizbollah told a press conference in Tehran. He recalled that his group had "recently" refused an offer by Germany to mediate such an exchange between Hizbollah and Israel. "We accept the help of a third country, but not that of Germany," the sheikh said, charging that Germany had committed a "great error" in implicating Iranian leaders in a murder trial.

Volume 22 Number 6668

AMMAN TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1997, JUMADA II 19, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 fils



By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

Bani Sakher woman candidate shot at by unidentified gunmen Companion receives bullet in the leg

AMMAN — Police Monday were investigating an attack on a woman candidate in which one of her companions was allegedly wounded.

Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid confirmed the attack on Wisaf Ka'abneh, the only female candidate among 20 in the Central Bedouin constituency, and said that the investigation into the incident was going on.

Ms. Ka'abneh, a lawyer by profession, told the Jordan Times that unidentified

gunmen, using a pick-up car, opened fire at her rented car in the Jizah District south of Amman at noon Monday.

She added that one bullet hit her driver Osamah Hamawi, 25, who was hospitalized at the King Hussein Medical Centre, she said. The bullet was removed from his leg before he was discharged.

Ms. Ka'abneh, who belongs to the influential Bani Sakher tribe, claimed that yesterday's attack

against her was the second in less than four days. Last week, supporters of a rival candidate smashed her car, she charged.

Ms. Ka'abneh said that she did not know who was behind the attack but added that the "conservative bedouin community cannot swallow the fact that a woman candidate can run for elections."

"This incident will not hamper my ambition to run for the elections. I will never give them the chance to frighten me," Ms. Ka'ab-

neh said. The Central Bedouin constituency covers several bedouin villages and towns in Jizah, Mowagar, Madaba and southern parts of the Mafrqa Governorate.

All the candidates in this constituency represent different clans of the Bani Sakher tribe.

Two seats are allocated for this constituency, where candidates' programmes focus on improving educational, health and life conditions for the bedouins. Security officials told the

Jordan Times that the man who was injured in the alleged attack has not given his testimony to the police and that police was looking for him.

The sources, who asked not to be identified, said that they "doubt" that such an attack had taken place and insisted that nothing, so far, could prove that there was an attack on her life.

"Maybe it is part of an election campaign to win the sympathy of the voters," one source said.

Prince Hassan says Europe wants more comprehensive role in Mideast peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has pledged that Jordan will exert its utmost efforts to give impetus to the peace process and the attainment of a comprehensive and durable peace that guarantees the rights of all parties in the region.

In remarks at a meeting with the Council of Ministers upon his return to Amman Sunday night from short visits to Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, where he met senior European officials, the Regent said that he had the impression that Europe wants to play a more comprehensive role aimed at securing the resumption of negotiations on all tracks including the Syrian and

the Lebanese tracks. Prince Hassan said that the Europeans have expressed their desire to see progress achieved in the region in general.

Prince Hassan saw in the Russian and French stands towards Iraq and Iran, and the postponement of U.S.-Turkish-Israeli military exercises clear evidence of a desire to prepare the political atmosphere conducive of breakthroughs in the region's many hot spots.

At the meeting attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh and His Royal Highness Prince Rashid, the Regent welcomed an active European role in the region as a complementary

role to that of the U.S. which aims at pushing the peace process forward.

Prince Hassan said his visits gave him the opportunity to meet with the presidency of the European Union and discuss the implementation of the Jordanian-European partnership agreement which will be signed on Nov. 24.

The agreement is expected to open new scopes for Euro-Jordanian cooperation in economic, cultural and security fields in a comprehensive manner serving the interests of the two sides.

Upon his return to Amman Sunday night, Prince Hassan was sworn in as Regent before the Cabinet.

Levy says Jewish settlement construction will be limited to 'necessary minimum'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel will limit construction in Jewish settlements to a "necessary minimum," its foreign minister said Monday amid reports that the government is ready to freeze new building projects on occupied territories for several months.

The U.S. has demanded a "timeout" in settlement construction, and Israel's offer came as U.S. Mideast coordinator Dennis Ross shuttled between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to try to ensure progress in renewed peace negotiations.

Negotiators said Monday they made headway on one issue of nine issues being debated — the operation of a Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip. Israel has demanded to have final say over security at the airport.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Mr. Ross on Monday. The Haaretz daily said Mr. Netanyahu would tell Mr. Ross that Israel will not start building new settlements for several months, but that construction already under way would be completed.

The offer was unlikely to satisfy the Palestinians who have demanded a complete halt of building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where they hope to establish a future state.

Israel's foreign minister, David Levy, suggested Monday that Israel was softening its position. Asked about a possible construction curb, Mr. Levy told Israel Radio: "We want to move forward and not create a situation that would make all our efforts to advance the process

irrelevant. Therefore, there are efforts to continue with [only] the necessary minimum" of construction.

Jewish settler leaders also said Monday they had learned Mr. Netanyahu was ready for compromise.

"We heard there is an intention to carry out a freeze," Aharon Domb, spokesman of the council representing the 144 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, told the Associated Press.

However, Zvi Hendel and Hannan Porath, two legislators who represent the settlers, told Israel Radio they were assured by Mr. Netanyahu there would be no "timeout" in construction.

Jerusalem's mayor, Ehud Olmert, said there would be no slowdown in settlement

Ross frustrated over slow progress in talks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Senior Israeli and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) officials met Monday under the mediation of U.S. envoy Dennis Ross in an effort to provide what he said was a needed boost to recently resumed peace negotiations.

Following a first day of separate talks Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Mr. Ross expressed frustration with the pace of the negotiations revived under U.S. sponsorship three weeks ago after a seven-month break.

"We need to intensify the work," he said.

In a bid to achieve a speed-up, Mr. Ross met again early Monday with Mr. Netanyahu and then arranged a previously unannounced encounter between Foreign Minister David Levy and top PNA negotiator Mahmoud Abbas.

Mr. Arafat insisted during his meeting Sunday with Mr. Ross that Israel immediately carry out two troop pullbacks originally scheduled for last March and September, Palestinian officials said.

Iraq says 18,000 registered in Jordan for census

AMMAN (R) — Over 18,000 Iraqis living in Jordan registered for last week's national census, the Iraqi embassy in Amman said on Monday. It said 18,764 people had been registered at the latest count on Saturday and registration was continuing this week.

Independent estimates put the number of Iraqis in Jordan at well over 100,000.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis fled their country during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait.

They continue to come to Jordan, despite hefty exit charges at the Iraqi border, fleeing after seven years of stringent international trade sanctions which have crippled Iraq's economy.

The census, conducted in Iraq on Thursday, put the total Iraqi population at 22 million.

But Iraqi officials did not say whether that figure included three northern Kurdish provinces where the U.N. estimates a population of over three million.

No census took place in those provinces, which have been largely outside Iraqi government control since an uprising after the 1991 Gulf war.

Jordan and Israel establish joint development authority

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin and Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon set up a joint development authority in a meeting here Monday, Mr. Sharon's office said.

The talks between the ministers to iron out the details of the authority — to oversee water, tourism, agricultural and industrial projects in the Jordan Valley — were held in a "good atmosphere," according to a statement.

The meeting, which also included Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv and his Israeli counterpart in Amman, follows last month's political crisis between the two countries that erupted after a Mossad attempt to murder Hamas leader, Khaled Misha'al, in Amman.

The ministers agreed they would speed up plans for projects in the Jordan Valley located along the border between the two countries, said the statement.

Dr. Haddadin said in the

meeting that "there is a strong, common interest between me and Minister Sharon," the statement added.

"Both of us cannot wait for things to happen by themselves and we both are eager to start the projects now," Dr. Haddadin said.

Mr. Sharon will within the next week visit Dr. Haddadin in Jordan to prioritise the projects and ensure their speedy implementation. Israel and Jordan signed a peace agreement in 1994.

FM plays down assault on embassy officials in Tel Aviv

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayez Tarawneh Monday played down an attack against two Jordanian employees at the Kingdom's embassy in Tel Aviv and described what happened as a "small incident."

Dr. Tarawneh was commenting on reports that extremist Israelis surrounded on Saturday the residences of two Jordanian embassy employees in Tel Aviv for four hours. The protesters threw stones at the windows and shouted anti-Jordan slogans, the Jordanian dailies said.

Dr. Tarawneh said that Jordan's ambassador in Tel Aviv, Omar Rifai, submitted a "complaint" on the incident to "the concerned Israeli authorities."

The minister said that Jordan "does not give much importance to the incident and does not want to blow it out of proportion."

"The incident was carried out by an irresponsible group and we believe the matter is over," Dr. Tarawneh said.

He described the employees, who were subjected to the attack, as "non-diplomats."

The attack against the Jordanian employees came after a strain in relations fol-

lowing the assassination attempt of a Hamas leader in Amman last month by two Israeli Mossad agents, which outraged His Majesty King Hussein.

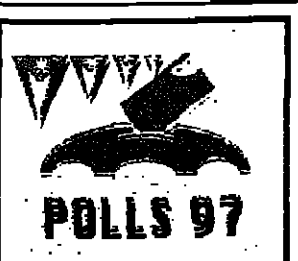
Last month, two security employees at the Israeli embassy in Amman were attacked by unidentified gunmen.

The attack against the Jordanian employees in Tel Aviv, whose names were not released, comes as part of a series of reported harassment against Jordanian diplomats in Israel.

Earlier this year, Jordan complained that Israeli security officials were harassing the Kingdom's diplomats at the borders.



U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross (left) gestures as he speaks to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the president's Ramallah headquarters late Monday afternoon (Reuters photo)



By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — Apathy, tribalism, lack of faith in the ability of next Parliament to induce change coupled with the absence of the Muslim Brotherhood have taken away the glamour of past elections campaigns in the Kingdom's second largest city.

Zarqa, a densely populated city plagued by poverty, pollution, unemployment and deteriorating infrastructure, is a stronghold of the Brotherhood, which used to mobilise

Zarqa voices lack of faith in upcoming House, feels absence of Islamists

the inhabitants of this city on elections day.

But with the Islamists' decision to boycott the ballots, many of the residents say they are shunning the polls. In 1993, the people of Zarqa voted for all three Islamic Action Front (IAF) candidates contesting the four Muslim seats allocated to their city. This time around, expectations are that voter turnout will be much lower than the 45.6 per cent of 1993.

"People here view the Muslim Brotherhood and anything related to it as a door leading to progress," Ayman Sob Laban, a shopkeeper said.

He added that elections will remain incomplete this year due to the near absence of political party participation,

which he considers a major missing element in the current elections.

For this reason and many others, the Zarqa resident added, "none of my friends and relatives are planning to vote."

Other reasons play a major role in keeping voters away from the polls. One is lack of trust in the future House, which is mainly due to the widespread belief that previous deputies have let the people of Zarqa down.

"If the IAF failed to accomplish anything substantial, then how can we expect anything from the candidates that will win this year's electoral race," another shop owner said.

"As soon as a candidate secures a seat in Parliament,

he forgets everything he had been calling for during his campaign and forgets all about the people that got him there," Mr. Sob Laban said.

The deteriorating economic situation is another significant issue that might lead many people to stay away from the ballot boxes. Many residents' concern is securing enough food, clean water and jobs and not what goes on under the Parliament's dome, which they believe will not improve their lot.

"My family is awaiting bread and not the next Parliament," a worker was quoted as saying in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday.

As in many constituencies around the Kingdom, tribal affiliations will determine who, out of 249,014 regis-

tered voters, will elect candidates from a pool of 40. The candidates are contesting five Muslim seats, including one Circassian-Chechenian, and one Christian.

"As a tribal candidate, I admit that tribal association is the base for a candidate. [The tribe's] approval and support is reflected on the performance of the candidate," Noman Ghweiri, a candidate of the powerful Bani Hassan tribe, said.

Some residents, however, are not happy with this trend.

"When the influence of tribes dominates the scene, you don't get the right man in the right place, instead you get a deputy whose main responsibility is serving his own tribe," one resident said.

Bani Hassan, the biggest

tribe in Zarqa, is fielding five candidates: Noman Ghweiri, Mahmoud Khalafieh, Mikhlid Zawabreh, Daif Allah Kalab and Ithamer Zioud.

The tribes of Beer Sabea are fielding four: Mahfouth Abu Mahfouth, Mohammad Abu Khorma, Khaled Ma'noun and Imad Abu Snaimeh.

The fact that so many candidates from the same tribe are running, reduces the chances of any of them winning, observers say.

Only one woman, Sabah Anani, is running. However, many residents are pessimistic about her chances of winning because, they say, Zarqa is a very conservative city.

Talal Ramahi, the candidate of the National Constitutional

Party running for the Muslim seat, is one of two running on party tickets. The other is Bassem Haddadin of the Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party.

The only Muslim incumbent of the 12th Parliament running in Zarqa is Fayad Jarar.

Fouad Khalafat, who won a seat for the Tafleeh district in 1989, is trying his luck in Zarqa for the second time, where he lost in 1993.

Mr. Haddadin, Mohammad Qusous and Jamil Kandah are competing for the Christian seat. Mr. Haddadin, who won 1,840 votes in 1993, enjoys wide support among the city's residents of Palestinian origin, observers say. But they add that also Dr. Qusous has a good chance.

Seven candidates are contesting the Circassian-Chechenian seat. They are: former Member of Parliament Abdel Baqi Jamno, former Member of Parliament for the Third District Mansour Murad, Mohammad Arsalan, Abdel Jalil Abu Baker, Ahmad Arabi, Kamel Abdel Qadous and Yusef Kheir Deen Hasan.

Other candidates are: Ma'rouf Quoseini, Samih Qariuti, Younis Dawameh, Marzouq Da'jeh, Adnan Mare'i, Zuhdi Qamar, Mahmud Hosh, Ahmad Kadoomi, Majed Abu-Naser, Tayseer Karkar, Jamal Figh, Mohammad Shomali, Ahmad Abu Baker, Marwan Irshaid, An Fares, Mahmoud Ja'afreh and Bassem Marairah.

Hamas prisoners end hunger strike saying release imminent

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Prisoners of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas have suspended a hunger strike after the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) promised they would be released in coming days, a spokesman for the movement said Monday.

The some 70 prisoners froze their week-long strike on Saturday after reaching an agreement with officials of the PNA. Hamas official Abdul Aziz Rantissi told Agence France Presse.

"If the Palestinian authority does not keep its promise, maybe the prisoners will renew their strike," Mr. Rantissi said.

The prisoners were protesting the lack of charges by Palestinian security against many of them. They have been held for durations ranging from several months to two years.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated this week his insis-

tence that progress in recently renewed peace talks depends on President Arafat waging a "systematic war" against Hamas and other groups responsible for anti-Israeli attacks.

Mr. Arafat last month arrested some 70 members of the Hamas and closed 16 welfare offices of the group after Israel revealed suicide bombers who carried out recent attacks in Jerusalem were Hamas militants from the West Bank.

The agreement to release some Hamas members would not include those detained after the recent attacks or who are still undergoing interrogation, Palestinian sources said.

Palestinian security officials have also decided to form a commission to examine the possibility of reopening the closed Hamas institutions, a Hamas official said last week.

Hamas is the major Palestinian movement opposed to peace agreements with Israel and has taken respon-

Sheikh Yassin: No dialogue, no recognition of Israel

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Hamas will never recognise Israel or enter into a dialogue with it but will seek to improve ties with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), its founder said in remarks published Monday.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin also renewed a pledge to continue deadly anti-Israel attacks until the Jewish state quits all Arab land.

"I am not ready for any negotiations or a dialogue with Israel and I will not recognise it," he told the United Arab Emirates weekly Al Shurooq.

"There is an Israeli de facto which we reject... God willing, the military action will continue so long as there is an occupation."

Sheikh Yassin, who was released this month after more than eight years in an Israeli prison, said Hamas would never

accept the landmark 1993 peace deal reached between the Palestinians and Israelis in Oslo.

He said he was also against the present negotiations between the PNA and Israel because they "will not lead to any results or realise the hopes of Palestinian people."

But he added relations with the PNA had become better and Hamas would work for further improvement.

"I have interfered to secure the release of Hamas prisoners and I expect the [Palestinian National] Authority to free them. We will also work to reopen Hamas's institutions."

The PNA, under pressure by Israel and the U.S. to shut 16 institutions run by Hamas in a crackdown last month following a series of deadly Jerusalem bombings in the summer.

sibility for most major attacks against Israelis over the past three years, including the recent suicide bombings which killed 21 Israelis.

Mr. Arafat's efforts to crack down on radicals were undermined when Mr. Netanyahu earlier this month had to release Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh

Ahmad Yassin in order to win the release of Israeli agents who botched a murder attempt against a Hamas leader, Khaled Misha'al, in Jordan.

Hamas rewards Misha'al's guards

AMMAN (AFP) — Hamas has rewarded the two bodyguards who captured the would-be assassin of one of its top leaders in Amman last month by giving them tickets and expenses for a pilgrimage to Mecca, Hamas sources said Monday.

In a ceremony conducted by Hamas in Amman, guards Muhammad Abu Seif and Abu Maher were decorated with emblems of the organisation.

They also received tickets and expenses for a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

The two guards captured a pair of Israeli Mossad agents in a chase and scuffle in downtown Amman on Sept. 25, moments after the agents poisoned a Hamas leader, Khaled Misha'al, using an unidentified device.

Mr. Misha'al survived the attack after Israel supplied the antidote to the poison in amends demanded by King Hussein, who was infuriated by the attack on Jordanian soil.

Jordan released the two Mossad agents early this month in a deal which also included Israel's release of Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin.

North Iraq calm but tense before ceasefire's end

ANKARA (AFP) — Northern Iraq was calm but tense Monday shortly before the expiry of a 72-hour ceasefire between warring Iraqi Kurds, with one faction demanding that the other fall back to its previous positions.

"The situation is calm but critical. It can explode at any moment," a source close to the Turkish government said.

A Western expert on the Kurdish situation in Iraq agreed, saying, "It's calm but tense."

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which lost ground in the five days of fighting that began a week ago, said it would only respect the truce for 72 hours, to give mediators time to force the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to pull back to its Oct. 12 positions.

The KDP, led by Massoud Barzani, also said it was upholding the truce for three

days so neutral observers could take positions along the line of the ceasefire established a year ago with Jalal Talabani's PUK. The latest ceasefire, which went into effect Friday night, was due to lapse Monday at 8:00 p.m. local time.

The source close to the Turkish government said, "Efforts are underway to convince the PUK to pull its forces back to the Oct. 12, 1997 ceasefire line" in place before the resumption of fighting last week.

"We [Turkey, the United States and Britain] expect the PUK to retreat to this line," she said.

The Western source confirmed that "the PUK was asked to withdraw behind this line." Asked whether the PUK had complied, she said at 1400 GMT, "No."

The two groups stopped fighting Friday night in response to an appeal by

Turkey, the United States and Britain, the co-sponsors of the KDP-PUK peace process begun October 1996 in Ankara. Last year's ceasefire came after two months of clashes in September and October when the KDP, backed by Iraqi forces, seized PUK-held territory including Iraqi Kurdistan's main city, Erbil.

The two groups have been fighting sporadically since 1994 over the sharing of power and revenues from border trade.

They have been in control of northern Iraq since the Gulf war in 1991 in which Iraq was driven out of Kuwait.

PUK and KDP representatives in Ankara were not available Monday afternoon.

However, the United Nations announced from Baghdad Monday that the KDP and PUK had promised to let the agency continue dis-

tributing humanitarian aid to the population of northern Iraq.

U.N. coordinator for humanitarian affairs Dennis Halliday obtained the commitments from Mr. Talabani and Mr. Barzani, said the U.N. humanitarian affairs spokesman in Baghdad, Eric Falt.

Mr. Falt said that the flow of food "has not been interrupted" by the fighting but "has been made very difficult in some areas as in the zones where the U.N. didn't have access to its trucks."

The two rival groups "borrowed" the U.N. trucks for military purposes. However, they agreed to return the trucks they had taken.

Halliday travelled to northern Iraq Wednesday to ask the KDP and PUK to stop fighting, not to hamper U.N. humanitarian operations and to let a polio vaccination campaign proceed.

Israel to speed up missile sales to Turkey — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel plans to speed up delivery of long-range air-to-air missiles to Turkey, selling at least 100 of the weapons by the end of next year despite Arab concern over the two countries' burgeoning military ties, the Jerusalem Post newspaper reported on Monday.

The newspaper, quoting Turkish defence sources, said at least 40 Popeye I missiles will be delivered to Turkey this year and a second batch of 60 are to be shipped in 1998. The deal is worth around \$100 million, the sources said.

The decision to speed up

delivery of the 150-kilometre range missiles was taken during talks last week in Ankara between Israeli army chief of staff, General Amnon Shahak, and Turkish government and military officials, it said.

The missiles would be for use on Turkey's U.S.-made F-16 and F-4 warplanes.

Defence ministry officials were not immediately available for comment on the report.

At the end of his visit to Ankara, Gen. Shahak announced that Israel and Turkey had agreed in principle to jointly produce a new gener-

ation of Popeye II missiles with air-to-ground capabilities and a longer range than the Popeye I.

News of the joint missile programme drew sharp criticism from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

"These are not positive changes and will absolutely trigger an arms race and create new tensions in the region," Mr. Musa said Sunday.

"Turkey is a brother state and a friend and is capable of reconsidering this policy," he said.

Israel and Turkey significantly boosted military ties last year with two major defence agreements which have drawn

sharp criticism from Arab states.

The centrepiece of the agreements was a \$630 million deal to have Israel upgrade Turkey's fleet of F-4 fighter jets.

The two countries also agreed on a series of joint training exercises, including air manoeuvres over Turkey which prompted alarm in neighbouring Syria.

A joint military manoeuvre between Turkey, Israel and the U.S. in the eastern Mediterranean had also been planned for next month but was postponed following angry reaction from Arab states and Iran.



ALGERIA ELECTIONS: An Algerian woman buys newspaper in the streets of Algiers prior to the next municipal elections in Algeria on October 23. Suspected Muslim militants killed 21 people in a series of attacks in Algeria at the weekend in the run-up to local elections (Reuters photo)

Iraq urges Syria and Turkey to reach three-way water sharing agreement

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq called on Syria and Turkey on Monday to find a way to share the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers fairly between the three countries, the official INA news agency reported.

In a letter sent Monday to the Arab League, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry asked Syria and Turkey to agree upon and apply an "equitable system for sharing the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates within a year," the agency reported.

The letter also accused Ankara of "hindering

efforts to find a solution to the problem of sharing water in order to obtain a larger share of water" for Turkey.

Iraq and Syria fear that dam construction by Turkey at the rivers' headwaters would reduce the flow reaching Iraq and Syria.

The Euphrates, originating in the mountains of Turkey, flows through Syria to Iraq. The Tigris, from the same origins, flows further east directly to Iraq.

importance to its water supply as it seeks to develop its long-neglected agricultural sector. The development is intended to offset the effects of U.N. trade sanctions slapped on Iraq following Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

According to a 1987 protocol governing use of the Euphrates, an average of 500 cubic metres of water per second are to flow downstream to Syria, while 58 per cent of that amount is to continue downstream to Iraq.

South Lebanon truce committee meets today

BEIRUT (AFP) — The international committee monitoring a truce in south Lebanon will meet on Tuesday to discuss a complaint filed by Lebanon, Lebanese officials said Monday.

Lebanon filed a complaint with the committee after two civilians were wounded Friday in the south during shelling by the Israeli military.

The committee oversees the April 1996 ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hizbollah under which they agreed not to target civilians or carry out attacks from civilian areas.

The panel, which includes representatives of France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the U.S., is to meet Tuesday at the U.N. Interim Forces in Lebanon headquarters at

Naqoura near the Israeli border.

Israel's self-declared "security zone" stretches across a 15-kilometre strip in south Lebanon.

Hizbollah is leading the fight to push Israel out of Lebanon, although it has said it will continue attacking the Jewish state even if it withdraws.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
16:00 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Sarah
20:00 Coach
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Great Defender
23:15 I Remember Nelson
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:21 Fajr
05:39 (Sunrise) Duhā
11:20 Dhuhūr
14:32 'Asr
17:02 Maghrib
18:19 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swidieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Relative cloud weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance of scattered showers and winds westerly to northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies

will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman13/20
Aqaba19/29
Deserts11/23
Jordan Valley19/29

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 20, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 58 per cent, Aqaba 32 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Mazrahah820425

Dr. Wissam Hazzayin748563

Dr. Munther Al Qraini779599

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyib620115

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asena pharmacy637055

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Nairookh pharmacy623672

Najib pharmacy847632

Dr. Salah Saffarini987565

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Dept661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 0853200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity644281/6

Akileh Maternity642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Munasher Hospital 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:05 Sanaa (RJ)

07:05 Damascus (RJ)

09:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:25 Beirut (RJ)

09:35 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

09:40 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

09:45 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

16:15 Cairo (RJ)

16:30 London (RJ)

16:40 Frankfurt (RJ)

17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights

08:00 Cairo (MS)

12:00 Riyadh (SV)

13:30 Dubai (EK)

15:40 Istanbul (TK)

16:45 Doha (GF)

17:05 Kiev (6U)

20:30 Tel Aviv (LY)

21:50 Aden (IY)

22:35 Lamaca (CY)

22:45 Amsterdam (KL)

23:55 Bucharest (RO)

00:25 Jakarta (GA)

02:00 Rome (AZ)

03:25 London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

Five killed, eight injured after bus collides with trucks near Jewideh

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Five people were killed and eight were injured, including two critically, Monday morning in a road collision near Jewideh Bridge, south of Amman, police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said.

According to police officials, the accident, which occurred at 7:20 a.m. on the Amman-Khreibet Al Souq Highway, involved a pick-up truck, a bus, and two

trailers.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the bus was driving beside the pick-up truck on a four-lane road, "when suddenly the pick-up truck changed its course and struck the bus, which was speeding."

"The impact caused the bus to jump across the divider and smash into two oncoming trailers," the police official said.

The collision killed five people immediately, including the bus driver, and completely wrecked the bus, he

added.

Traffic officials blamed the driver of the bus for speeding, and the pick-up truck driver for swerving into the wrong lane.

The five people who were killed on impact were identified by officials as Nawaf Fawaz, 23, the bus driver, Wa'el Adnan, 22, Ahmad Mohammad Hussein, 25, Mohammad Khalid, 34, and Rami Hassan, 23.

The injured were rushed to Al Bashir Hospital in Amman by CDD rescue teams.

Monday's crash was the sixth-worst reported road accident to take place in the Kingdom this year.

On July 9, eight Saudi nationals were killed and 22 more injured in a road collision that involved a private transportation bus and a truck near Rewished borders.

Police records stated that 2,292 people were killed and 63,505 were injured in 138,150 road accidents in the Kingdom in the past five years.

Majali predicts economic growth during visit to Ajloun

AJLOUN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday said he expected Jordan to realise a six per cent economic growth in 1997 now that the Kingdom has succeeded in reducing imports and increasing exports and has adopted a package of new regulations concerning the national economy.

During a visit to the Ajloun Governorate, where he met with the local executive council, the prime minister said Jordan was moving steadily forward and his government was continuing the implementation of the economic restructuring programme that started in 1989 and ends next year.

The government is dedicat-

ed to maximising investments, balancing trade, and raising the rate of national income, and will pursue privatisation to enable the private sector to handle its activities in a free, competitive atmosphere, according to the prime minister.

Dr. Majali pointed out that the dinar is now stronger than it has been for 15 years and has become a convertible currency on foreign markets. He added that the Central Bank of Jordan's foreign currency reserves are worth JD1.5 billion.

Referring to Jordan's relations with Arab countries, he said these relations are brotherly and stronger than they have ever been.

On the peace process, Dr.

Majali said Jordan was seeking a comprehensive peace involving all parties, including Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, adding that any Arab achievement will be good for the entire Arab Nation.

Jordan is also seeking to establish the Arab common market, because it is a necessary component for pan-Arab unity, he continued.

The government's main tasks include organising the upcoming general elections, pursuing economic reform programmes, continuing the peace process, and addressing internal issues, including the faults in the public administration system, he said.

The prime minister lis-

tened to Ajloun Governor Abdul Latif Tarawneh outline the general situation in the governorate and the main projects underway. The governor also presented a briefing on preparations for the Nov. 4 elections, noting that the total number of registered voters stands at 57,822 who can cast ballots at 44 voting centres.

After Ajloun, the prime minister visited Jerash, where he met the executive council and reviewed general issues in the governorate.

He listened to a briefing by Governor Khamis Abu Salim on the preparations for the general elections. According to the governor, a total of 53,177 citizens are registered for the upcoming elections.

Investigation procedures contested in attack plot trial

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The trial of four men accused of plotting attacks against Israel opened Monday at the State Security Court with the defence team contesting the investigation procedures.

Abdul Rahim Yousef Safarini, 25, Mujahed Abdul Jawad, 29, Sa'oud Mohammad Khaleleh, 24, and his brother, Issa, 21, are officially charged by the state with possession of illegal explosives (hand grenades) and automatic weapons with illicit intent.

At the beginning of the session, Presiding Judge Colonel Yousef, Faouri informed the four defendants of the charges pressed against them and asked for their plea.

Defence Attorneys Mohammad Dweik and Mohammad Hantoush presented a five-page statement contesting the investigation procedures by the prosecution.

State Prosecutor Mahmoud Obeidat asked the court for time to prepare a response to the attorneys' charge.

The court tribunal agreed and set Oct. 26 to hear the prosecution's arguments.

The charge sheet stated that the four men, who met in June, had planned to infiltrate Israel through Wadi Araba in southern Jordan during the month of Ramadan.

The four, however, were apprehended by authorities before carrying out any attacks.

Prosecutor Obeidat con-

firmed Monday that the four men are affiliated to the outlawed group Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), of which 10 of its 13 members received prison terms ranging from two years to life imprisonment after being convicted by the State Security Court on charges of attempted sabotage and of slandering His Majesty King Hussein.

"Our investigations indicated that these four defendants were part of the Bay'at Al Imam group," Prosecutor Obeidat told the Jordan Times.

The group followers believe themselves to be the true followers of the Islamic faith and do not attend mosque prayers or schools because they reject the entire system.

Second national products fair opens today in Khartoum

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will open its second national fair in Khartoum today, displaying samples of Jordanian products by 32 companies and other businesses in a bid to boost Jordanian-Sudanese trade relations.

Sudanese Minister of Foreign Trade Othman Hadi will formally open the seven-day fair, which was organised by the Jordanian Trade Association (JTA) in conjunction with the Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCCO), according to JTA Director General Halim Abu Rahmeh.

Mr. Abu Rahmeh, who along with Kamal Qaqish, JTA vice president will leave Wednesday for Khartoum, said the firms represent various economic sectors and the event is designed to orient the Sudanese public and private sectors on the products.

The Jordanian delegation and businesspeople will tour public and private sector projects and discuss prospects for joint ventures, according to Mr. Abu Rahmeh, who said the Jordanian firms were encouraged to hold a second fair in Khartoum following the success of the previous fair, held in 1995, when Jordanian firms concluded numerous deals.

The trade balance between the two countries is heavily in favour of Sudan, which last year imported JD10.7 million worth of goods against JD14.6 million exported to the Kingdom, he said.

In the first five months of this year, he said Jordan exported JD4.9 million in goods and imported JD8.4 million worth of Sudanese products.

Jordan sells medicine, veterinary medicine, cement, paint, tomato paste, paper, plastic products, gas ranges, engineering products, and potash, and buys Sudanese meat, melon seeds, and molasses, according to Mr. Abu Rahmeh.

Government health professionals hold two-hour strike, plan further measures

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Doctors, dentists, and pharmacists employed by the government Monday observed a two-hour work stoppage from 10 a.m. until noon to support earlier demands for better pay, but Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi informed the strikers that the government would not succumb to unrealistic demands.

The strikers are demanding an amendment to the pension scheme that would provide two-thirds of their overall active service salary, a 35 per cent allowance for their full-time government work, an increase of their professional allowance from 90 per cent to 120 per cent on the basic salary, and payment of 60 per cent of the total amount collected by hospitals as treatment fees.

The strikers said the government has delayed in meeting these demands for nine years and they are determined to increase the work stoppage Tuesday to three hours, Wednesday to four hours, and Saturday to a full day.

The strikers held a meeting at Al Bashir Hospital, where they announced that their strike was not politically motivated, but by their professional rights.

Faleh Tawil, director of



Public sector health care professionals take to the streets Monday after leaving their jobs on a two-hour strike. The strikers say they will escalate the strikes unless the government meets their demands (Petra photo)

services at the Ministry of Health and Medical Care, urged the strikers to desist, stressing that Dr. Kurdi was trying to solve their problems.

Bassem Dajani, Jordan Medical Association president and spokesperson for the three associations, said the strikers are willing to hold a dialogue with the government to reach a solution.

The strikers are going ahead with their plans unless

their demands are met, he said.

Bassem Kiswani, a member of the ministry's doctors' committee, said reports from the various governorates affirmed that the two-hour strike was observed.

Dr. Kurdi said the ministry understands the strikers' demands and will try to do what is possible to meet them.

He said it is not logical nor humanitarian to leave

patients unattended for the sake of backing demands for salary increases and urged the members of the three associations to call off the work stoppages.

Stating that the negotiations with the government were still going on, Dr. Kurdi said the government will not succumb to unreasonable demands, but stressed that the agreements reached between the two sides two years ago will be implemented.

Ministry examining new political parties law — Rashid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid said his ministry is studying a new political parties law, which he said will better accommodate political developments and the requirements of the next century, according to a report published in Al-Dustour Arabic daily.

The minister said the new draft law will deal with loopholes in the present law, primarily the question of the minimum number of founding members of a

party, which at present is 50.

Mr. Rashid said these studies and ideas involved in the draft law will be submitted to the public via the media so they can be fully discussed by the public and political groups prior to drawing up the draft law.

The government will then refer it to the new Parliament to debate it and approve it in its final version, according to the minister.

Mr. Rashid said his min-

istry has discovered that some political parties have violated the present law and asked them to adjust to and abide by the regulations, especially with regard to the presentation of statements on their budgets and financial resources to the ministry.

He said the ministry has asked these parties to conform to the regulations by the end of 1997, warning that the ministry intends to re-examine these budgets at that time.

Seminar examining media, press freedoms opens next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Centre announced Monday that it is holding a seminar entitled "The Media and Press Freedoms in Jordan" on Oct. 28-29, in conjunction with the London-based ARTICLE for freedom of expression and the Amman-based Arab Media International (AMI).

According to the announcement, the seminar will revolve around eight main axes and a roundtable meeting, during which 13 working papers will be reviewed.

The first axis, entitled "The Assessment of the Press since the Start of Democracy," entails reviewing a working paper on the

work of the media and the press since 1989 and will be chaired by Mahmoud Sharif, chief editor of Al-Dustour daily.

The second axis, entitled "The Impact of Amendments to the Press and Publications Law on Journalism and Journalists," will review four papers and will be chaired by Laila Sharaf, a senate member.

The third axis, entitled "The Facts about the Jordanian Press," will discuss several working papers dealing with the daily and weekly press and the political parties papers, and will be chaired by Mahmoud Al-Kayed, Al-Ra'i board chairperson.

The fourth axis, entitled

"Parliament, the Judiciary, and Press Freedom" will be chaired by Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi.

The fifth axis, entitled "Elections as Portrayed by the Media," will be chaired by Abdul Ilah Khatib, former minister of tourism and antiquities.

The sixth axis is entitled "Technology vis-a-vis the Media and Press and the Public," and will be chaired by Ihsan Ramzi, director general of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation.

The seventh is entitled "The Press and Information," and will be chaired by Ali Mahafza, professor of history at the University of Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM
* "Golden Eye" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL
* Swedish film "Elvira Madigan" and British film "Sense and Sensibility" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively.

CONCERT
* Musical performance by Freddy For Music at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* Ceramics exhibition by Ra'd Dlsami at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Oct. 30.
* "Oriental Gem Trees" by Latifi Hamdan at

the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 23.
* Paintings by Iraqi artist Walid Nasrallah at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 28.

* Paintings by Abdul Qader Bakheet at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 30.
* Works by Iraqi artist Ali Al-Ebadi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 23 (Tel. 5537598).

* "The Project of the Essence: Aspects of the Italian Paintings in the 90s," at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, until Oct. 22.
* Exhibition of paintings and weaving entitled "Murmurs of Our Land" by Riham Ghasib and Bani Hamida at Bani Hamida House (Tel. 6588967), until Oct. 30.

* Exhibition of Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aura Mediterranea" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).

Amman Chamber of Industry urges citizens to vote

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Chamber of Industry has called on citizens to exercise their constitutional right of voting in the upcoming general elections and choose candidates who will work to enhance the national economy, encourage investment, and attract foreign capital to be invested in Jordanian projects to create jobs and boost exports.

In a statement published recently in the local Arabic dailies, the chamber said the country needs to bolster inter-Arab economic relations as a step in the creation of a pan-Arab free trade zone.

The chamber's council held a meeting last Thursday to study

its position on the parliamentary elections, slated for Nov. 4, and reviewed various candidates' positions, according to the statement.

They found that all of them pledge to uphold national policies concerning Jordan's relations with Arab and foreign countries and support the country's democracy and political pluralism, the statement continued.

These candidates adhere to the principles of free expression and respect of human rights, seek to encourage the sense of national belonging, support trends strengthening Jordan's intrinsic capabilities, and support the rights of all citizens to

acquire decent work and achieve prosperity for the country, the statement added.

The candidates have all expressed their intention to support the private sector's initiatives to enhance its role in the construction of the national economy and to utilise the Kingdom's human and natural resources through expanding vocational and university education, the statement continued.

It said investment in education is the right channel for creativity, productivity, and development, and for addressing the challenges facing the nation.

The Chamber of Industry, which represents a large and important economic sector,

calls for the concentration of efforts, in conjunction with Parliament, to achieve sustainable economic and social development and enable the executive authority to carry out projects that can achieve this objective, according to the statement.

Referring to the previous Parliaments, the Chamber said they cooperated with the government in studying and passing economic laws that have had a far-reaching, positive impact on economic development and investment and yielded positive results, including increasing Jordan's exports, creating jobs, contributing to boosting the gross domestic product, and further enhancing

the country's political and security climates.

These consultations and meetings have had a positive effect on modernising the country's laws, especially those pertaining to the economy.

Thanking the previous Parliaments for their efforts, the statement said the Chamber appreciates the deputies for their understanding of the private sector's situation and its aspirations and expressed hope that the Chamber will cooperate with the next Parliament in order to pass further economic legislation, such as the customs law, with the purpose of giving momentum to socio-economic development.

Russian government, parliament compromise; truce nears

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian government and the opposition-dominated parliament reached an accord on greater cooperation Monday, helping to defuse a crisis in which the Communists had threatened to stage a no-confidence vote.

The executive and legislature were able to agree on all the main questions, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told Interfax two days ahead of Wednesday's planned no-confidence vote in the Lower House of Parliament. The breakthrough was reached in talks at the Kremlin between President Boris Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin, the speaker of the lower house Gennady Seleznev and speaker of the upper house Yegor Stroyev.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, who had threatened last week to resign if a no-confidence vote went against him, said the negotiations had been

"very constructive."

Mr. Seleznev, himself a Communist, told reporters: "I do not rule out that deputies who initiated this (no-confidence motion) could remove their signatures from the motion."

Alexander Shokhin, leader of the pro-government Our Home is Russia party, said neither the government nor parliament had wanted "to put each other in a corner."

According to Interfax, the government agreed to several of the leftist opposition's demands for dropping Wednesday's vote, including holding regular meetings of Mr. Yeltsin, the premier, and parliamentary speakers.

Expanded consultations will also be held with the participation of parliamentary faction leaders in a roundtable. Mr. Chernomyrdin said, with the first item to be the opposition's fight against plans

by Mr. Yeltsin to expand land privatisation.

In addition, the parliament will be able to put observers at the first and second television stations, which the Communists accuse of running pro-Yeltsin news coverage, and may be able to start a parliamentary newspaper.

Mr. Seleznev said that softening the impact of a cut in housing subsidies would be negotiated by a parliament-government commission and that there were also plans to compensate savers whose deposits were wiped out by inflation and economic reforms in 1992.

However, with the two sides still wide apart on the government's tough 1998 draft budget, proposed tax code, land reform plans and other economic reforms, it was unclear whether the opposition could be placated.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov told

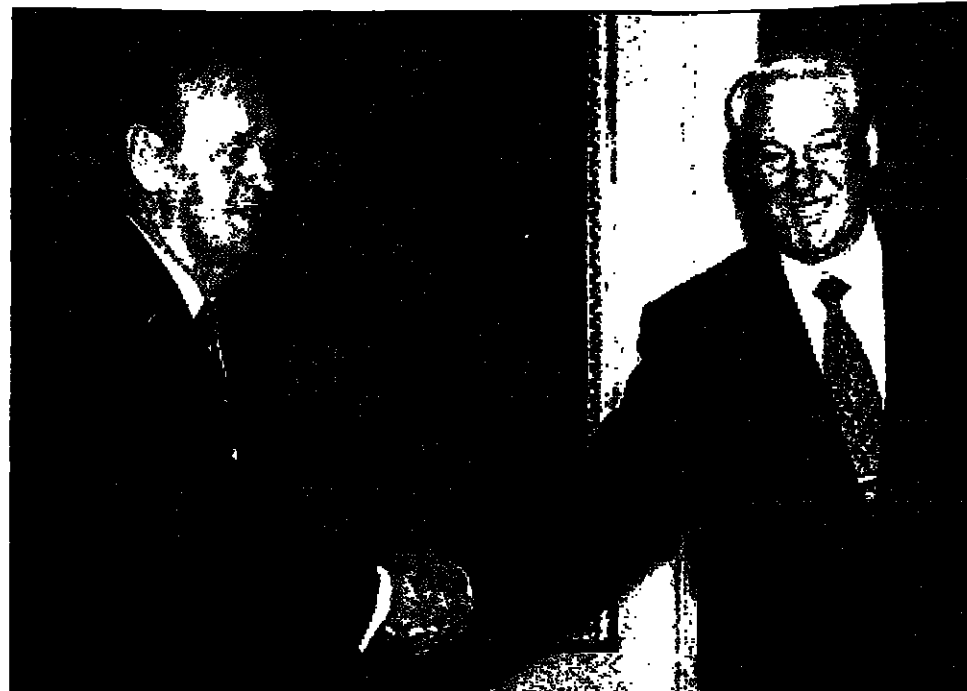
reporters that "for now we are not dropping" the no-confidence threat.

He said that Tuesday parliamentary leaders will meet with Mr. Yeltsin. "We want to get guarantees from him, not promises, but acts."

In particular, Mr. Yeltsin should sign a law on government which would change the way the government and parliament function together.

Grigory Yavlinsky, the leader of the free-market opposition party Yabloko, said he would only call a truce if the government changed its proposed tax code.

If the lower house votes no-confidence twice within three months, Mr. Yeltsin must either fire his cabinet or disband the parliament and call new elections. A first attempt to vote no-confidence was abandoned Oct. 15 after Mr. Yeltsin intervened to plead for compromise.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) shakes hands with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien after their talks in the Kremlin. President Yeltsin marked the new personal friendship with Chrétien by confirming his backing to landmines ban pact due to be signed in the Canadian capital (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin gives apparent boost to landmines ban treaty

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin gave a fillip Monday to the international treaty to ban anti-personnel mines, apparently softening Russian opposition with a hint that he might travel to Canada for its formal signing.

The Russian leader was, however, making no firm commitments.

Speaking after a meeting here with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Mr. Yeltsin said he did "not rule out" the possibility of going to Ottawa for the signing ceremony. And he stopped short of saying that he would sign the document if he did so.

But Mr. Chrétien promptly took the opportunity to declare that "Boris Yeltsin and I see eye-to-eye on this problem."

Mr. Chrétien recalled that mankind "pays a very heavy price" for the existence of anti-personnel mines, and emphasised that most of the weapons' victims are children and other non-combatants.

Canada has led efforts for a treaty to ban anti-personnel mines, which is due to be signed in Ottawa in December, but Russia held back from endorsing the draft version hammered out in Oslo in September.

Russia is one of the three major anti-personnel-mine

producing nations, along with China and India. All three countries, and Iraq, South Korea and the United States, have refused to sign the draft treaty.

Mr. Yeltsin advised reporters to "study very attentively" the text of a joint statement to which he and Mr. Chrétien had just put their names.

The Russian-language version of the statement quoted the Canadian leader as saying that he hoped Russia would "sign up as soon as possible to the convention banning anti-personnel mines," and added that Russia "agreed with that opinion."

The joint statement went on to declare that "Russia is ready to cooperate in every way with all states which are interested in achieving the aims of the convention."

But Russia's commitments went no further than saying that it would "extend the existing moratorium of exports of anti-personnel mines until a convention is signed in that sense."

So far, the official Russian line is that there are "technical" reasons why it cannot support a ban on such weapons.

Even after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia is the world's largest country and has the longest stretch of frontier in the world, bor-

dering on 12 other nations.

Many military officers here argue that if Russia were to give up deploying anti-personnel mines along its borders, it would have to vastly increase the numbers of soldiers and police guarding its frontiers — a task which it has difficulty doing at current troop levels.

Mr. Yeltsin's latest statement came 10 days after he told a summit conference of the 40-nation Council of Europe in the French city of Strasbourg:

"We support and will support the objective which we are pursuing in order to reach a solution and the signing of the convention."

Mr. Yeltsin was responding to a call from summit host President Jacques Chirac of France to all 40 countries "to sign the treaty on a total ban on anti-personnel mines agreed last month in Oslo."

Mr. Chrétien arrived in Moscow Saturday on a five-day visit.

Apart from the subject of anti-personnel mines, which figured in his discussions with Mr. Yeltsin Sunday, he and the Russian leader are due to talk about trade relations between their two countries which are generally regarded as under-developed by comparison with their political relations.

Djukanovic confirmed as winner, but his rival complains on vote

PODGORICA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Montenegrin reformist premier Milo Djukanovic was confirmed Monday by the official electoral commission as the winner of the republic's presidential vote at the weekend.

Mr. Djukanovic scraped in with just 6,328 votes ahead of his rival, former president Momir Bulatovic, after 98 per cent of the ballots cast in Sunday's vote were counted, deputy head of the commission, Miras Radovic said.

Definitive official results for the second round which had a turnout of 72.91 per cent will be released Monday evening, Mr. Radovic added.

Mr. Radovic said Mr. Bulatovic had submitted two appeals to the commission concerning voter registration which would be examined.

After the first round of vote on Oct. 5, Djukanovic's electoral headquarters and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is monitoring the polls, said that the register of voters should be checked, since many voters had not been listed.

Some 9,000 mostly young voters were subsequently added to the voter list.

"Djukanovic managed to attract many young people to remember their right to vote. They finally understand that the vote can influence their own future," Milan Popovic, a local journalist said.

The OSCE said it would give its comment on the vote Tuesday, and independent observers from the British Helsinki Committee, who also monitored the vote, said that no major incidents were reported.

The vote for Montenegrins was a choice between greater autonomy for their republic, within rump Yugoslavia, the platform offered by Mr. Djukanovic, or unconditional alliance with Serbia, favoured by Mr. Bulatovic.

In the capital Podgorica, Mr. Djukanovic's supporters were still celebrating their candidate's victory midday Monday. After his victory was announced earlier in the day by the electoral commission, fireworks sparked over Podgorica sky while hundreds of cars were driving along the main boulevard.

"This is the only right president for our Montenegro," a young man draped in a Montenegrin flag yelled opening a huge bottle of champagne amid

celebratory gunshots. Several couples were dancing in the square where Mr. Djukanovic's electoral headquarters is located, while the crowd cheered "Viva Montenegro" and "Long live Milo!"

Hundreds of cars made a deafening noise with their alarms and horns blowing. Supporters even came from Mr. Djukanovic's hometown Niksic, driving for an hour along curvy mountain roads to the capital, rushing to join the long-awaited fiesta in Podgorica.

And everybody believed that the celebration marked the new beginning for tiny Montenegro.

"So long, Bulatovic, welcome Milo!" a huge graffiti in Montenegro Republic Square said, while people passing by smiled at the words.

Reports of the appeals filed by Mr. Bulatovic did not ease the euphoria.

"He could complain as much as he wants to, but we won!" Zdravko Jerkovic, a 25-year old student said.

Mr. Bulatovic's headquarters remained closed for reporters Monday, and no official statement was made.

The official results were expected around 8:00 p.m. Monday (1800 GMT), the commission said.

'War crimes court probes top Croats'

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A former prosecutor at the U.N. war crimes court in The Hague said Monday that top Croatian political and military leaders are being investigated for alleged atrocities during a Croatian army attack into Serb-held Croatia in August 1995.

Court investigators are probing central figures in "Operation Storm," the former prosecutor, Erik Oestberg, revealed in an interview with Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter. "I would be surprised if 'Operation Storm' did not lead to indictments at a very high level," Mr. Oestberg told the paper, adding: "I have not said (Croatian) President (Franjo) Tudjman, but high-level people within the Croatian general staff."

As president, Mr. Tudjman was commander-in-chief of the Croatian Armed Forces.

According to the newspaper, Mr. Oestberg also said senior politicians were under investigation for their role in the alleged crimes.

In a lightning offensive, the Croatian army retook Krajina, which had been controlled by Serbs since late 1991. The Croats heavily shelled Knin, the Serb "capital", and columns of fleeing refugees were shelled.

Croatian soldiers also used U.N. peacekeepers as human shields.

The Swede gave the newspaper interview having just completed a two-and-a-half-year stint as a senior prosecutor in The Hague and is no longer under an obligation of secrecy.

Mr. Oestberg said he was not involved with the investigation, but said he knew of its existence. Without providing details, the Swede said it is being conducted by a special group within the tribunal's prosecution division tasked solely with "Operation Storm."

The former chief prosecutor of the tribunal, Richard Goldstone, last year denied that such an investigation was ongoing.

The tribunal has so far indicted 78 people. Included on that list are 20 Croats, 15 of whom are now in prison.

Mr. Oestberg, who was appointed to the tribunal in early 1995, has returned to Stockholm to retire.

Britain's Fergie begs royal forgiveness, Sun says

LONDON (R) — Royal outcast the Duchess of York has written to Britain's Queen Elizabeth appealing for forgiveness for her past misdeeds, the Sun newspaper said Monday.

The duchess, popularly known as Fergie after her maiden name Ferguson, wrote a "long and rambling and very emotional" letter to the queen in the week following Princess Diana's funeral last month, said the Sun.

Buckingham Palace declined to comment on the Sun story.

The tabloid believes Fergie's overture was part of a plan to smooth the way for a reconciliation with the queen's second son, Prince Andrew, from whom she was divorced early last year.

Fergie also wrote to Diana's former husband, heir to the throne Prince Charles, and his sister Princess Anne, one of the most respected members of the royal family.

Prince Charles and Princess Anne were "shocked," said the Sun. "The letters are seen as a concerted attempt by Fergie to worm her way

back into the royal family," the paper quoted a senior royal official as saying.

Fergie and Prince Andrew, 37, have made no secret of their still warm relationship. The couple are often seen in public together where they appear happy and relaxed, kissing and embracing one another.

Fergie and her two daughters, Beatrice, 9, and Eugenie, 7, were with Prince Andrew at Diana's funeral and she celebrated her 38th birthday last month at a dinner with her ex-husband.

But the royal family will find it hard to forgive and forget the embarrassment Fergie caused them after her separation from Andrew in 1992.

The red-haired duchess was photographed topless beside a swimming pool in France allowing an American friend she had described as her "financial adviser" to suck her toes while Beatrice and Eugenie looked on.

Then she ran up debts of millions of pounds through a lifestyle of champagne, designer clothes and holidays. The queen refused to bail her out.

Fergie has repeatedly expressed remorse over her behaviour, but in her gaffe-prone way has continued to offend both the royals and the British public.

Earlier this year, Fergie provoked a rift with Diana by revealing in her autobiography that she had caught verrucae from borrowing "the princess's shoes."

The two, who had been close friends and confidantes throughout their rocky royal marriages, reportedly had not spoken to one another for six months before Diana's death in a Paris car crash on Aug. 31.

The duchess may have hoped that just as the royals bowed to public pressure to mourn openly for Diana, who like Fergie was ejected from the royal fold, it would now be willing to embrace another prodigal daughter.

The Sun said this was unlikely.

"It is understood the existence of the letters has been deliberately leaked to the Sun because senior members of the royal family, including the queen, do not want Fergie to get back with Andrew," it said.

Smog hits Malaysia again

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Changing wind patterns have brought smog back to Malaysia but meteorologists said Monday the haze would end with the arrival of monsoon rains next month.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Air Pollutant Index (API) breached the unhealthy range of 100-139 early Monday, but light showers in the late afternoon provided a brief respite.

"The southeasterly wind is bringing smoke from (the Indonesian provinces of) Sumatra and Kalimantan but it should clear over the next two days," a spokesman from the Meteorological Department told AFP.

Several industrial areas outside Kuala Lumpur such as Gombak, Nilai, Kajang, Petaling Jaya and Shah Alam as well as the south-east state of Malacca also recorded unhealthy API

readings of between 100 and 200.

Most parts of Malaysia have enjoyed bright sunshine and blue skies in the past two weeks after being shrouded by dense haze since August, caused by smoke from raging fires in neighbouring Indonesia.

At its worst, the API burst through the 500 hazardous level last month to a record high of 835 points in the eastern Sarawak state, forcing the government to declare an emergency which lasted 10 days.

The Meteorological Department also advised ships to avoid the busy Malacca Straits straddling Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia as smog had limited visibility to below one kilometre.

The smog is expected to continue until Wednesday morning, the department was quoted as saying by Bernama news agency.

before the monsoon season gets under way next month.

Meanwhile, Australia earlier on Monday offered 300,000 Australian dollars (\$220,430) in financial aid to help Malaysia conduct an air quality study following recent haze problems.

The Australian High Commission here said the "decision was taken in response to a request from the government of Malaysia to conduct the study in the Kuala Lumpur region."

"The study will be undertaken by the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in conjunction with the Malaysian Department of Environment," it said in a statement.

"It is expected that part of the contribution will go towards the purchase of air-monitoring equipment needed for the study," it added.

Paedophiles invited to Sri Lanka on Internet

COLOMBO (R) — Child prostitution in Sri Lanka is being heavily promoted to foreigners on the Internet, fuelling an already rampant sex industry, the Independent Island newspaper said Monday.

"There are more than 600 advertisements on the Internet on child prostitution in Sri Lanka, inviting paedophiles from foreign countries to enjoy sex with children of any age of their choice safely," the newspaper quoted S. Ranuge, commissioner of probation and child care services, as saying.

"Physically, emotionally and sexually abused children are an ever worsening social problem in Sri Lanka," Mr. Ranuge said.

Sri Lanka is also notorious for being one of the leading producers of child pornography supplied to the European market, he said.

"In 1995, the Stockholm police alone had detected 300 hours of child pornography films involving Sri Lankan children and foreigners," Mr. Ranuge said.

A survey in 1986 showed that 36,000 young boys were in the sex business in the

coastal districts of Sri Lanka.

"But today, the number should have gone up many times," Mr. Ranuge said.

Non-commercial child abuse is also on the increase in Sri Lanka, especially due to the increasing migration of women to the Middle-East and the near 100,000 children currently employed as domestic servants, Mr. Ranuge added.

The government last year passed tough new laws aimed at curbing paedophilia and non-governmental organisations have been running awareness campaigns to combat the menace.

Mir crew start Spektr repairs

KOROLYOV, Russia (AFP) — Russian cosmonauts braved floating debris in the airless Spektr module on the Mir space station Monday as they worked to reconnect the solar panel control system and restore full electricity.

Work was being hampered by the remains of U.S. scientific experiments ruined when Spektr was damaged and depressurised in a near-fatal collision with a cargo craft in June, the cosmonauts told Russian ground control.

Mir engineer Pavel Vinogradov was forced to trap the broken experiments in boxes before getting down to the main task of rerouting the computerised control system orientating Spektr's solar panels via Mir's other laboratory module, Kristall.

Alexander Spirin, director of the Energiya Corporation which runs the Mir programme, said "the work of the cosmonauts is being hampered, notably by the door from an American fridge" in which the experiments were stocked.

Russian space flight Director Vladimir Solovoyov said Vinogradov's work was also being made difficult by the size of his bulky space suit, the plethora of cables inside Spektr and the narrowness of the science module.

The cosmonaut entered the module, punctured in at least one place in the June smash, at 1:40 p.m. (0940 GMT), some 45 minutes behind schedule.

Solovoyov, also wearing a space suit to survive in the depressurised conditions, was directing his colleague's tricky work from the entrance hatch.

It was unclear whether the cosmonauts would be able to complete their task within the six hours permitted by their space suits, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

If the repairs are completed in time Mir will be able to better orientate Spektr's solar panels, and allow the 11-year-old space station to draw more power from the sun.

That would permit U.S. astronaut David Wolf to carry out the full programme of scientific experiments on his agenda.

"Currently, the power supplies are alright, but the space walk will allow them to be optimised," Solovoyov said earlier.

Wolf was to spend the entire space walk in Mir's Soyuz escape craft, ready to supervise a rapid return to Earth in the event of an emergency.

Solovoyov and Vinogradov first ventured inside the airless Spektr module on Aug. 22, but failed to locate the hole caused by the June 25 collision, the worst accident to have befallen the ageing Russian space craft.

Spektr is thought to have been punctured in at least one location, near one of the two main solar panels attached to its hull.

A second possible hole was detected late last month when the crew of the departing U.S. space shuttle Atlantis photographed Mir as the crew pumped air into Spektr.

Before returning to Earth two Atlantis crew members also attached a cap outside Spektr which will be used to complete repairs.

Cosmonauts will permanently attach the cap with a sort of cosmic "superglue" during later spacewalks.

Monday's repairs are vital to the future of the accident-prone space station, whose series of main computer failures and breakdowns have badly damaged the credibility of the Russian space effort.

The string of problems also hit relations with NASA, which came under heavy pressure to end space cooperation with Russia, influential voices on Capitol Hill accusing NASA of playing Russian roulette with U.S. lives.

Moscow is heavily reliant on NASA, which is paying \$473 million over five years for the right to keep an astronaut aboard Mir, to keep its Mir programme going.

World News
Singapore
Mir crew
start
Spektr
repairs
KOROLYOV, Russia (AFP)
Russian cosmonauts
braved floating debris in the
airless Spektr module on the
Mir space station Monday as
they worked to reconnect the
solar panel control system and
restore full electricity.
Work was being hampered
by the remains of U.S. scientific
experiments ruined when
Spektr was damaged and
depressurised in a near-fatal
collision with a cargo craft in
June, the cosmonauts told
Russian ground control.
Mir engineer Pavel
Vinogradov was forced to trap
the broken experiments in
boxes before getting down to
the main task of rerouting the
computerised control system
orientating Spektr's solar panels
via Mir's other laboratory
module, Kristall.
Alexander Spirin, director
of the Energiya Corporation
which runs the Mir programme,
said "the work of the
cosmonauts is being hampered,
notably by the door from an
American fridge" in which the
experiments were stocked.
Russian space flight
Director Vladimir Solovoyov
said Vinogradov's work was
also being made difficult by
the size of his bulky space suit,
the plethora of cables inside
Spektr and the narrowness of
the science module.
The cosmonaut entered the
module, punctured in at least
one place in the June smash, at
1:40 p.m. (0940 GMT), some
45 minutes behind schedule.
Solovoyov, also wearing a
space suit to survive in the
depressurised conditions, was
directing his colleague's tricky
work from the entrance hatch.
It was unclear whether the
cosmonauts would be able to
complete their task within the
six hours permitted by their
space suits, the ITAR-TASS
news agency said.
If the repairs are completed
in time Mir will be able to
better orientate Spektr's solar
panels, and allow the 11-year-
old space station to draw more
power from the sun.
That would permit U.S.
astronaut David Wolf to carry
out the full programme of sci-
entific experiments on his
agenda.
"Currently, the power sup-
plies are alright, but the space
walk will allow them to be
optimised," Solovoyov said
earlier.
Wolf was to spend the entire
space walk in Mir's Soyuz
escape craft, ready to super-
vise a rapid return to Earth in
the event of an emergency.
Solovoyov and Vinogradov
first ventured inside the airless
Spektr module on Aug. 22,
but failed to locate the hole
caused by the June 25 colli-
sion, the worst accident to
have befallen the ageing
Russian space craft.
Spektr is thought to have
been punctured in at least one
location, near one of the two
main solar panels attached to
its hull.
A second possible hole was
detected late last month when
the crew of the departing U.S.
space shuttle Atlantis photo-
graphed Mir as the crew
pumped air into Spektr.
Before returning to Earth
two Atlantis crew members
also attached a cap outside
Spektr which will be used to
complete repairs.
Cosmonauts will perma-
nently attach the cap with a
sort of cosmic "superglue"
during later spacewalks.
Monday's repairs are vital to
the future of the accident-
prone space station, whose
series of main computer fail-
ures and breakdowns have
badly damaged the credibil-
ity of the Russian space effort.
The string of problems also
hit relations with NASA,
which came under heavy
pressure to end space coop-
eration with Russia, influ-
ential voices on Capitol Hill
accusing NASA of playing Rus-
sian roulette with U.S. lives.
Moscow is heavily reliant
on NASA, which is paying
\$473 million over five years
for the right to keep an as-
tronaut aboard Mir, to keep its
Mir programme going.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1971Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYEDDirector General:
MOHAMMAD AMADEditor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.MENA needs
breakthroughs

THE AGENDA of the U.S. peace envoy to the Middle East, Dennis Ross, touches not only on the still faltering peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) but also on the need to prop up support for the Doha economic conference on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) due to be held next month. Of course the most effective way to shore up support for the Doha summit would be to deliver something tangible on the Palestinian front between now and the conference's date. Should Israel be persuaded to implement at least some of the many unfulfilled promises of the Oslo accords, such as the overdue redeployment of its troops from additional Palestinian territories, the Arab countries would be in a better position to take part in MENA IV and strive to make a success to the benefit of all peoples in the region.

The first signals from the latest round of talks between the U.S. envoy and the Israeli leaders suggest that the parties have not left square one. Until and unless Ross' fourth mission to the region in less than two months produces something more concrete, the fast-fading trust in the peace process stands to disappear completely. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not seem to comprehend the urgent need for gestures from his side that go beyond his usual and sterile rhetoric about wanting peace with security. It is either Netanyahu does not have the capacity to understand what needs to be done to revitalise the peace effort or he does not want to. Even the modest progress on establishing sea and air ports for the Palestinians in Gaza has not gone beyond the resumption of the talks on the two subjects.

The pattern used by this Israeli prime minister is all too familiar. It reminds us of the tactics used by former Premier Yitzhak Shamir who confessed soon after the start of the Madrid peace conference in 1991 that his aim was to procrastinate until there was no meaning to the talks. Under these circumstances the Doha conference is unlikely to produce much, especially in areas where regional cooperation with Israel is warranted and called for.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i expressed the view that the current political and media controversies in the Arab World revolving around the Doha economic meeting is bound to cause further splits within the Arab World. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the issue over whether to attend the Doha meeting or not is sowing seeds of dissent that tend to take the inter-Arab relations back to square one. It should be noted, however, that Qatar is not enthusiastic about hosting the meeting but it is honouring an international commitment to play the host for the countries in the North Africa and the Middle East in a bid to promote economic cooperation, according to the writer. But, he said, the idea of the economic meeting has been confronted with an adverse political climate largely due to Israel's practices and it is to be noted here that the U.S. has been exercising pressure on the Arab countries to attend the meeting despite these countries' strong belief it would not achieve anything as long as the Middle East problem remains unresolved. The writer said the Arab countries are to blame for their current weak economies and lack of cooperation among themselves contrary to calls issued by last year's Cairo Arab summit. Had there been closer forms of cooperation among the Arab states, he added, the idea of holding the Doha meeting in which Israel is to be represented would not have materialised.

A WRITER for Al Dustour tackled demands by doctors, pharmacists and dentists employed by the government at the health centres and hospitals saying that the Ministry of Health is bound to remain committed to increasing their pay in accordance with last year's memorandum of understanding. Mohammad Daoud said that the strikers have been repeatedly threatening to go on strike, but the work stoppage is bound to harm the public, something which the government naturally does not want to see happening. The writer said that despite the Ministry of Health's endeavours to improve the work conditions of these professionals, nothing short of increasing the strikers' pay can prevent the strike. Should the government remain adamant as to the strikers' demands, it risks having doctors, pharmacists and dentists seeking jobs elsewhere in Jordan or abroad and eventually the Jordanian public is bound to face this loss, according to the writer, who said that the delay in meeting the strikers' just demands is also bound to adversely affect their performance at their present jobs.

View from the Fourth Circle

State and press: mutual irresponsibility
on the dizzying road to Arab liberalism

By Rami G. Khouri

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision in the last week of September to suspend publication of about a dozen weekly newspapers only briefly re-ignited the political controversy that flared when the temporary press and publications law was passed last summer. That law, which among other things required weeklies to have a minimum paid-up capital of JD 300,000 (around \$440,000), has been singled out by the opposition as a glaring example of the government's alleged heavy-handed, autocratic, and anti-democratic tendencies. The government in turn has either ignored the opposition complaints, or justified its actions on the basis of sound morality, national security, and economic efficiency. The opposition's glaring failure to rally any substantial public support reflects the fact that the Jordanian public finds the matter only slightly significant, and even less entertaining.

The wholesale disappearance of over a dozen weekly newspapers in a country like Jordan at a time like this — in the early stages of a purposeful, gradual shuffle towards participatory governance — raises critical issues about the most fundamental human process of thought and thinking in the modern Arab World: What are we allowed to think and say? Who decides what is appropriate or harmful to society? How is a consensus on these issues achieved? Where does the irrepressible biology of human thought intersect with the compelling ideology of modern state-building?

The government rightly points out the short-term harm that some irresponsible weeklies have done to the economy and collective morality by publishing stories that sparked capital flight, shocked moral sensibilities, or caused a drop in exports (for instance, of Jordanian fruits and vegetables, following press stories about polluted irrigation water in Jordan). Yet, the draconian manner in which the government has tried to cure this ailment may result in far more harm to Jordan's well-being and reputation in the long term. The government's draconian measures breed domestic indignity, which in the long run is as harmful to the quality of Jordanian statehood as a seasonal drop in lettuce exports.

The government seems to be blaming the press predominantly for the occasional consequences of the structural vulnerabilities of the economy, environment, export sector, relations with Arab states, and other aspects of statehood. This is puzzling and shortsighted at best, and politically

simultaneous and irresponsible at worst. Killing the messenger who brings the bad news is a very old tradition, but also a politically ineffective one. The government of a good state like Jordan should work to increase and deepen the marketplace of ideas, not to emasculate it. It is an insult to our intelligence to claim that the government could find no other practical means of curbing the excesses of a handful of weeklies with limited readership without hurting the continued, healthy proliferation of varied ideas and viewpoints in the rest of the mass media.

The continued assertion of a state-initiated, state-defined, and state-implemented process of thought control is a modern Arab catastrophe that should be mercifully killed and buried. It is contradictory to the principles of democratisation and liberalisation that we espouse as a country; a blow to the nascent, fragile process of Jordanian political modernisation; degrading to individual Jordanians' right to hear and speak a variety of differing views; harmful to the aim of attracting foreign investment; and ultimately corrosive to the domestic quest for stability and progress based on participation and pluralism.

Weekly newspapers such as Al Majd, Al Hadath, Al Mithaq, Al Urdun, Al Bilad and others represent important indigenous currents of political, social and religious thought. Their very appearance in our midst represents the best traditions of Jordanian and Arab-Islamic society — the capacity to allow different, competing ideas and identities to be expressed within a wider national superstructure of tolerance, respect and, ultimately, solidarity. I may disagree with their views, but I am enriched by their presence in my country, and proud of the fact that they appear here and intellectually and culturally engage one another and the rest of us. The government's decision to suspend publications like these is bad politics, bad journalism, bad morality, bad economics, bad development, bad national unity, and bad democratisation. It suggests that we are suffering the same kind of slippage as has been experienced recently in other Middle Eastern lands that have moved forwards and backwards on the dizzying path to liberalisation.

In this respect, we in Jordan may broadly mirror the dominant political culture of the Arab World, rather than offer a meaningful alternative to it. Our mass media, like that throughout the Arab World, reflects the political transformation and modernisation of Arab society, and the Arab

World's professional and cultural interaction with the Western world. It also reflects the continued determination by state authorities to maintain rigid parameters of permissible political thought and cultural expression.

The Arab mass media in general — in the Mideast or in Europe — has divided into three broad groups: a) those that stay within the firm guidelines set by Arab governments and their allied elites, b) those that go to the other extreme of incessantly and critically attacking Arab governments and ruling elites (via licensed or underground publications), and, c) those that downplay politics in favour of sex-violence-and-soap-opera-style distraction, largely copying the American and British media's tendency to adopt entertainment, titillation, and amusement as the profession's defining values and primary purpose.

Most striking about the Arab mass media is its attempt to leapfrog from the stage of state-controlled mouthpiece and propaganda machine to that of market-driven amusement industry — without passing through the stage of providing quality material, reliable and complete facts, impartial critiques, and a fair balance of diverse opinions and viewpoints. The few flashes of quality, credible Arab journalism are the exceptions that confirm the rule, and most, unfortunately, are found abroad.

Probably the single biggest constraint to a credible Arab mass media has been the heavy-handedness of the modern Arab state and its thought control colonies. The perpetuation of the state's tendency to single-handedly define and maintain limits on what we read and say is glaringly contradictory to other state-managed transitions towards liberalism, in the economic and communications fields, for example. The state's responsibility is not to emasculate the marketplace of ideas, but rather to expand it, enrich it, and protect it. Instead of playing policeman of the mind, the Arab state would do better to use its power to promote the quest for a more democratic, inclusive means of defining and achieving those reasonable limits on expression and mass media that we all agree need to be defined and achieved for overriding moral and national security interests. Faced with an opportunity to act responsibly, some parts of our press and government both acted irresponsibly. Let's hope they both learn from the experience, and react to the next opportunity with more wisdom and composure.

Holocaust that Israel
would rather ignore

The Israelis are preparing to withdraw the name of their next proposed ambassador to Turkey. His fault is that he believes in the genocide of the Armenians. Patrick Cockburn in Jerusalem asks if Israel is ignoring obvious parallels between the Holocaust and the slaughter of the Armenians in World War I to further its foreign policy goals.

IN THE next few weeks, Israel is expected to withdraw the name of Professor Ehud Toledano as its nominee to be Israel's next ambassador to Turkey. The Turkish government will not accept him because 15 years ago he appeared on an Israeli Army Radio programme about the Armenian genocide of 1915.

The Turkish government's position is that, contrary to the evidence of survivors, diplomats and missionaries present at the time, there was no genocide. It categorically denies one million Armenians died in massacres or on forced marches organised by the Turkish authorities of the day. The very fact that Professor Toledano, a specialist in Turkish studies, appeared on a programme entitled The Armenian Genocide is enough to disbar him from representing Israel in Ankara.

If Turks deny the genocide ever happened, for Armenians it is at the centre of their historic memory, the great slaughter in which one-third of all Armenians in the world were wiped out. Israel has a more ambivalent position. Israel has a political and military alliance with Turkey which the government does not want to endanger by drawing parallels between the Jewish Holocaust and the genocide of the Armenians.

For Dr. Yair Auron, a specialist in the Armenian genocide, this is unacceptable. He says that by meekly looking for another nominee to replace Professor Toledano, Israel is transforming the genocide "into an open issue subject to negotiation." He compares, hypothetically, what has

happened over the Toledano appointment to a European state which had appointed an ambassador to Germany and the Germans rejected it "claiming that 30 years ago he mentioned on the radio that Nazi Germany carried out a Holocaust of the Jews."

Israel does have a lot at stake. In recent years, its alliance with Turkey, which has a common border with Iran, Iraq and Syria, all Israel's enemies, has become very close. This week General Amon Lipkin-Shahak, the Israeli chief of staff, paid an official visit to Turkey to persuade the army to buy Israeli Merkava 111 tanks. It also wants Turkey to adopt the Galil as its main assault rifle. Joint Israel-Turkey-U.S. naval manoeuvres are scheduled for January. Ankara is now the third most important capital for Israel's diplomacy, coming only after Washington and Moscow.

But, according to the Jerusalem weekly Kol Ha'ir, which carried out an investigation into the affair, there was no objection in the Israeli cabinet on June 8 when David Levy, the foreign minister, first put forward the name of Ehud Toledano, a professor of Ottoman history at Tel Aviv University, to be Israel's next ambassador to Turkey.

Turkish consent to the new appointment should have been automatic. But in August it became clear that there was a problem. There was no official announcement, but at the end of the month the state-owned Turkish news agency, citing sources in the Turkish foreign ministry, said difficulties had arisen. It said "in 1981 Toledano accused Turkey of carrying out massacres during World War I." An Israeli foreign ministry official, who went to Ankara to find out what was happening over the appointment, reported back that "Turkish opposition is adamant."

Bizarrely, Professor Toledano had appeared on an Israeli Army Radio programme in 1981, but to defend the Turkish posi-

tion. He was called in at the last minute because the Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv refused to send a representative. He says he gave the Turkish version of what happened in 1915 without offering his own opinion.

Professor Toledano has given a series of interviews to the Turkish press, seeking to persuade them of his pro-Turkish views. He says he "never expressed a pro-Armenian position in international conferences," adding that he is primarily an expert on the Ottoman empire from 16th to the 19th centuries. "I never researched or investigated the period of World War I," he said. "I never questioned the Turkish version of events."

Professor Toledano is reported to believe that his academic colleagues at Tel Aviv University helped to sabotage his candidacy by suggesting to the Turks that he holds pro-Armenian views.

The foreign ministry may also be able to see a silver lining in the affair, in that the new Israeli ambassador is now likely to be a professional diplomat and not an academic friendly with David Levy.

But the overall issue is more important than diplomatic or academic intrigue. Yair Auron, a professor at the Kibbutzim college in Tel Aviv, says that a survey he conducted of 800 students at eight Israeli universities and colleges showed that "most of them said they knew nothing about the genocide of the Armenians or gypsies." Israel's education ministry is resisting pressure to treat the genocide more fully in the schools' curriculum.

Dr. Auron says: "I accept the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but what happened to the Armenian was not a tragedy or a massacre but genocide. The Turkish government does not accept this. Not to admit there was a genocide is parallel to not admitting there was a Holocaust. Morally they are the same."

The Independent

LETTERS

Trial in 3rd country not possible

To the Editor:

THE EDITORIAL in yesterday's issue of the Jordan Times was misleading both as to the facts behind Libya's violation of Security Council resolutions and stance of the British government.

The British government is not, as you suggested, changing its mind over the Libyan suggestion of holding a trial in a so-called "neutral" country. The fact is that a trial of this case can only take place in the courts of either Scotland or the USA as recognised by Security Council Resolution 731.

Trial in a third country is simply not possible. There is no legal authority for a Scottish court to meet outside Scotland. The only place that the two accused can face trial under Scottish law is in Scotland. Similar considerations apply to U.S. courts.

The reason why a trial is proving — as you put it — so "elusive" is because the Libyan government refuses to respect United Nations Security Council resolutions and hand over the suspects for trial in Scotland or the U.S. The Libyan government's offer of a trial in a third country is not a sign of flexibility but merely a disingenuous smoke-screen. The argument that Libya cannot send its citizens to

Scotland to stand trial because we have no extradition treaty is clearly specious. Libya has no extradition treaty with the Netherlands or other "neutral" countries either.

Nor is there any substance to Libyan claims that the two suspects would not receive a fair trial in Scotland. Innocent men have nothing to fear in Scottish courts and if the two men were tried and found not guilty that would be the end of the matter. Nevertheless, to meet any concerns on this score, the British government has made it clear to the Arab League, the Organisation for African Unity, and other interested organisations that they would be welcome to send observers to a trial. My government has also made it clear that it would offer these observers full access to the proceedings and also to the accused themselves.

The British government is doing all it can therefore to facilitate the early holding of a trial. It is time for the Libyan government to respond seriously and honestly, not by putting up suggestions which are clearly impracticable.

C C R Battiscombe,
HM Ambassador,
Amman.

Revisiting ABCs of tourism

To the Editor:

A NUMBER of friends and I had a dream-like holiday planned over the weekend of October 16-19. Since early September, we signed up with a highly reputable Jordanian travel agency on an exclusive offer for a package tour to Luxor, Egypt. The package included flight bookings (Amman-Luxor-Amman) and best seats for Verdi's Aida at the Hetshesepet Temple. Our chartered flight was due to leave Marka airport at 12:00 on Oct. 16 for Luxor in time to attend the performance of Aida at 19:00 that same day.

This all seemed like a well-worked plan. But the events of the day proved that our optimism in its "workability" was ill-founded, in the absence of a contingency plan. Thursday, Oct. 16 turned out to be beginning and very end of our holiday; our package was reduced to a four-hour tour of Marka airport and back to Amman.

This misfortune was by no means the result of any direct fault of our tour operator. The chartered plane that was supposed to carry us suffered a sudden but seemingly acute mechanical failure and would not make it on time. It was, however, rather enlightening to know that the contracted airline company in fact runs a chartered flight service with a fleet consisting of one plane only. The very one that had gone out of operation. It was equally interesting that our reputable tour operator had planned a same day "flight and performance" in Luxor with this fact in mind.

To be fair, though, both the airline company and the tour operator did try to consider other options to get us to Luxor on

time. The tickets to the Aida performance for Oct. 16 were rather expensive and non-refundable. Nevertheless, the one option perhaps not adequately considered by our tour operator was to get us to Luxor in time for the next day's performance despite the extra cost implications they may have had to bear. In any case, this rather belated and ad hoc effort, however well-intentioned, unsurprisingly bore no fruit. And the only feasible conclusion at the end of four hours of waiting was that we should forget about "Aida" and head back home. Many of us have not been in touch with our reputable tour operator since; and neither have they! The least we would have expected them to do is ring us up a) to apologise for the inconvenience; and b) to inform us of their intended arrangements for reimbursing us for the cost of this trip (which we have "lent" them since September).

My point in sharing this incident with your readers is one that touches the very core of the ABCs of practice in the tourism sector. Jordan, quite rightly, is pinning high hopes on attracting tourists to boost its economy. But unless we can offer a private sector tourist service that is willing to go all out of its way to satisfy its customers (inbound and outbound) — including in a problematic situation such as the one I have been through — and unless we can upgrade both the level and standard of the resources that would complement this service, then all our hopes in a flourishing tourist-oriented economy will go in vain. Just like our "Aida, Luxor" trip!

Name withheld upon request

JORDAN MAGNESIA COMPANY LTD.
Pre-Qualification of Turnkey Contractor for
Magnesium Oxide Project
Tender No.: MgO-3/97

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Jordan Magnesia Company intends to erect a plant to produce high quality Magnesium Oxide in Jordan. The plant will be designed for the production of 50000 tonnes per year of High Quality Dead Burned Magnesium Oxide and 10000 tonnes per year of Speciality Products from Dead Sea brine by using the Precipitation Process. The plant will be located at the southern end of the Dead Sea, close to the Arab Potash Complex near the town of Safi, approximately 120 km south of Amman and 220 km north of the Red Sea port of Aqaba. A product storage and ship loading facility will be located at Aqaba, which form part of the project.

SCOPE OF CONTRACT

Tender documents will be issued to qualified contractors which will include a basic engineering package requiring tenders on a turnkey basis. The Contract will include detail engineering design for all disciplines covering both Safi site & Aqaba terminal including Civil, Structural, Mechanical, Piping, Electrical, Controls and Instrumentation, Building Services and Fire Protection, and procurement of all plant process and utility equipment and delivery to site. Construction will include temporary construction facilities, site preparation, foundations, buildings and steel structures, installation of all mechanical/electrical equipment, instrumentation, piping systems, tanks, bins, loading & unloading facilities and painting. The contract will also include testing, commissioning, start-up and putting the plant into normal operation, plus one year maintenance guarantee.

PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Interested contractors who have the necessary design and construction resources may apply for the Pre-Qualification Booklet. This booklet will explain in general, the services required, and is available until November 10th, 1997 against 300 US\$ from :-

JORDAN MAGNESIA COMPANY LTD.
ADLI CENTER- SHMEISANI
P.O. BOX 941701, 11194, AMMAN- JORDAN
TEL. 9626 691201/3/4 & 9626 695945 FAX 9626 695939 & 9626 691156

Final date for submitting the prequalification documents is 12:00 hrs noon, November 20th, 1997.

Chairman of the Board

Government puts JTC privatisation into high gear

By Suha Ma'ayeh
 Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Transport and Telecommunications Minister Bassam Saket said Monday his ministry will forge ahead with plans to privatise the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) and will sell 40 per cent of JTC shares to a strategic partner to be selected in accordance with international tender regulations and criteria.

Dr. Saket told the Jordan Times that the strategic partner sought should not necessarily be an investor in terms of financial weight but a partner which can provide technical expertise.

The government's plans to privatise JTC was announced following the Cabinet meeting last Saturday.

"The ministry will place a tender for interested parties which will be requested to comply with certain conditions," said Dr. Saket.

The remaining 60 per

cent of the company's shares, Dr. Saket added, will be offered to the public in accordance with the companies law.

The Cabinet also announced that the government will provide the JTC with a licence to establish, manage and operate a mobile network, which will start operations as of Nov. 1, 1998, after the expiration of the mandate of the company presently operating the present mobile network.

"In such a growing market, the new network will create competition with the present mobile company which will be encouraged to introduce up-dated services," Dr. Saket said.

The new mobile company, which the government will ensure it provides quality services, will be the last to be licensed until the year 2001, Dr. Saket added.

The government's decision to privatise the JTC was part of the Kingdom's efforts to encourage foreign investment in both the public and private sectors.

Abu Dhabi considering privatisation of ports

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi is considering selling part of its port operations to the private sector to expand services and to meet growing business, an Abu Dhabi port official said.

Hassan Al Qamzi, undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Sea-ports Department, said the sale could include warehouses, containers, refrigeration and maintenance operations.

"A study on privatisation of

those sections will be presented to the executive council (local government) for a final decision," Mr. Qamzi told the business weekly Emirates Today.

"Like other important economic sectors, privatisation of ports has become imperative and it should be carried out at all United Arab Emirates (UAE) ports. Such a move will have positive effects on port services," he said.

Austrian Airlines holds conference at the Dead Sea

THE AUSTRIAN AIRLINES held its annual Middle East conference at the Dead Sea Hotel and was attended by the airline's directors in Turkey, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, the Gulf region and Jordan as well as a delegation from the Austrian Airlines in Austria.

The conference which was held on Tuesday and Wednesday Oct. 14 and 15, 1997 was extremely successful and included tourist trips. The delegation expressed admiration of Jordan and the excellent treatment accorded its members and the facilities offered them at the Queen Alia International Airport.

In cooperation with its general agent in Jordan—Petra Tours—he Austrian Airlines hosted a reception in honour of the delegation and in observance of completion of five years since the start of the Austrian Airlines' operations to Jordan.

Mr. Sami Abdul Saud, director of the Austrian Airlines office in Jordan, presented a briefing about the facilities offered by the airlines to the tourist and travel offices and the passengers and the number of flights to Jordan in addition to new routes to Europe and America.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) There's nothing but chaos around you. Take five minutes to set priorities. A person who lives far away can give you some very good advice about how to deal with a situation close at home. Let that person know what's going on with you. Keep the conversation confidential.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you're considering making a big purchase, you should be shopping right now. Don't buy anything, just get the prices. Be sure to hold out for a good bargain. If you see one, snatch it up. You're such a good shopper, you might even go into the business.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There could be a great deal of money coming into your account. It would be from far way, and it also has to do with a partnership. If you don't know of any money coming in at all, you may be surprised to get a refund check in the mail. If that doesn't happen either, ask for one.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Someone is pushing your buttons. To give credit where it's due, it must be acknowledged that you push their buttons right back. Everybody's in a state of agitation. Luckily, you're strong enough to hold your own, even in this rowdy crowd. Have a good time, while you're at it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Today there's a hassle going on. Action is required, and so is a decision. You may feel like you can't really make up your mind yet. You're going to have to do it pretty soon. Some of the pressure is coming from a very dear friend, so, relax. It will do you good if it hurts you at all.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You could be approached by a friend in need. You're not in a very solid financial situation yourself. Encourage your financially impaired associate to market another of his or her talents. Do it together, to get rid of all your money worries.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The powers that be are pushing you towards success. An older woman is involved. If you go along with her agenda, your success is assured. You'll also use a loved one's advice and information you've learned recently. You are not alone. Relax and do what the others tell you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You feel like trying something you've never done before. So if you see a fabulous opportunity, go for it. It might mean you have to travel a little farther. That's not a detriment. Don't even worry about the money. You'll make it back sooner, rather than later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your focus is on jointly held finances. You need to get your money into order. This is the perfect time of year to make those decisions. You don't need to do the whole thing today. Make an appointment with your attorney and/or accountant. They'll help you get organized.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You've got everybody interested in taking action, but nobody knows what to do. Assign duties. Stay in charge. Anticipate breakdowns. Whatever you have planned this evening, expect it to go some other way than you expected. If you know that ahead of time, it won't be such a shock.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You've got clients calling from all over the place. Friends have assignments for you. Don't worry if it seems like there's a flurry of activity. Other people look to you for counsel and advice. Help them settle down and get their own jobs done. That'll give you more time to do yours.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your attention is on someone you love. This relationship is developing quite nicely. The two of you have a lot to discuss. Money trauma, for example. Don't let it get in the way of a beautiful thing. You can find a way to get everything. Think about it for a little while longer.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Discharges
- Henry of baseball
- Literary monogram
- Italian seaport
- Grassy plain
- Molasses liquor
- Kind of clause
- Ripen
- January: Sp.
- Sharp pain
- Brightly shining
- Fruit liquor
- Most urgent
- Cashier employee
- Hoard
- Fissure
- In the manner of
- Camera's eye
- Hammerhead or lean
- Taler
- Byrnes or Roush
- Heavy leather trousers
- One at —
- Purplish red
- Onus
- Indigene
- Least adorned
- Tomorrow, in Toledo
- Buenos —
- Geoid
- Chess champ
- Angel's favorite letters?
- Angled for elvers
- Haute, Ind.
- Certain bill
- God
- Minneapolis suburb

by Eugene Puffenberger

DOWN

- Ovum
- Debussy's "La —"
- A pig — poke
- Lacking vitality
- Dolor
- Frighten
- Choir voice
- Cheer word
- Kind of mind
- Connecticut city
- Michigan city
- Baby carriage
- Captain Hook's aide
- Accomplishment
- Resembling: suff.
- Aspired
- Colorado River gorge
- Tolerates
- Roy's singing partner
- Fall in folds
- Pursue
- Director Sidney
- Gulf of the Arabian Sea
- Mock serenade for newlyweds
- Emphasized
- Cowered
- Golden style
- Greek letter
- Brewer's yeast
- Mother-of-pearl
- Hen
- Steam
- Dill herb, old
- Ring master
- Numerical prefix
- Sea eagle
- Power agcy.

JORDAN TIMES

TEL: 684311-699634

Peanuts



Andy Capp

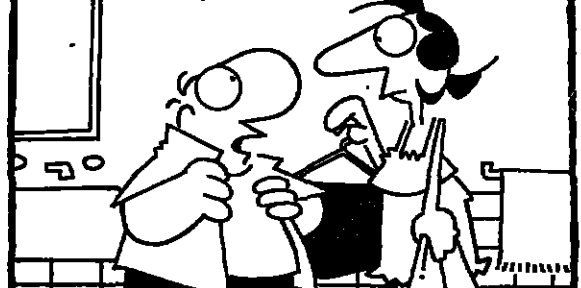


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen



"My doctor says I'm a good candidate for the flu. I didn't know that was something you could vote on."

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RIMEN

GLUNE

FLUTIP

RUMABI

Watch your shadows

WHAT THE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER THOUGHT THE LIGHTING LESSON WAS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SOUSE NOISY FEDORA CHROME

Answer: Why the game warden didn't believe his story — IT SEEMED FISHY

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Investments drop by 61.4 per cent during first nine months of this year

**** THE LATEST** statistics from the Directorate of Companies Control at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply show that until the end of September 1997 a total of 46,572 companies capitalised at JD4,134 million was registered at the directorate. The total during the first nine months of this year was 3,598 companies compared to 3,521 companies that registered during the first nine months of last year. But the capital of those companies was down by 61.4 per cent as it amounted to JD174.94 million during the January-September period of 1997 compared to JD453.7 million during the same period of 1996.

During the month of September alone, a total of 354 companies capitalised at JD6.59 million was registered compared to 352 companies capitalised at around JD16.8 million during September of 1996. This represents a drop of 61 per cent.

Various types of companies were registered during last month but none was from the public shareholding category. Two public shareholding companies capitalised at JD9 million were registered during September 1996. By sector, 17 industrial companies

registered last month bringing in JD687,000 in investments compared to JD1.11 million of industrial investments during the same month of 1996. The trade sector absorbed 207 new companies (224 companies during September 1996) capitalised at JD3.2 million. The volume of commercial investment was 70.6 per cent lower than the JD10.95 million registered during September 1996.

There was also a decline in agricultural investments as investors shunned the farming sector last month. During September 1996 one agricultural company capitalised at JD4 million was registered.

The only two sectors that posted higher investments last month were the construction and service sectors. In the construction area, six companies carrying nearly half a million dinars of capital were registered compared to three companies capitalised at JD160,000 during September 1996.

The services sector received JD2.16 million of investments from 100 companies compared to JD0.6 million of investments from 95 companies that registered during September 1996 (Al Ra'i).

Jordan telecoms privatisation seen boldest step so far

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's move to sell a major chunk of its profit-generating telecommunications firm to a foreign investor is its boldest privatisation move so far, investment analysts said Monday.

They applauded a Cabinet decision on Saturday to endorse a recommendation by the top privatisation body to raise the equity stake on offer to foreign investors in the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) to 40 per cent from 26 per cent.

The proposed sale would make Jordan the first Arab state to allow private foreign ownership of its fixed network, while retaining a JTC monopoly on the operation of fixed lines till 2002.

Investment analysts said the pioneering sell-off could bolster Jordan's investor image, until now hurt by the slow pace of the country's privatisation which critics say has been marred by piecemeal steps and the lack of a coherent strategy.

"It is a solid step in the right direction because of the keenness on making the privatisation plan a success as shown by the big increase in the size of the proposed sale," said Omar Masri, investment manager who runs the Amman-based Atlas Investment Group.

"The higher share makes

it more saleable to the international telecommunications operators who have shown interest," said Ziad Al Basha, securities manager at Jordan's British Bank of the Middle East.

Some say the present government, seen by analysts as a caretaker authority appointed to see Jordan through its November parliamentary elections, has moved to preempt any foot-dragging by a new government and ward off future resistance from lobbies fearful of foreign asset stripping.

But although Mr. Masri and others said the step was bound to be well received by international investors, it raised much higher expectations on Jordan to perform by global investors.

"They have to ensure it's a resounding success because this is their jewel in the crown," Mr. Masri said.

The telecommunications sale is the major privatisation move, aside from a long planned sell-off of a 33 per cent stake in the state-owned cement firm, Jordan Cement Factories.

Unlike some shares sell-offs in loss-making concerns which Jordan has offered to investors, the proposed 40 per cent equity sale of the firm is a potential money spinner for investors.

Revenues of JTC in 1997 are expected to post a healthy rise from 172 million dinars (\$243 million) in 1996, mostly from its

monopoly on international calls.

"They have a high collection rate of 95 per cent which is economically very feasible in terms of cash flow," Mr. Basha said.

U.S. bank Merrill Lynch, which the government appointed along with its local partner Jordan Export Finance Bank last January as financial adviser to the sale, estimates the firm's assets between 800 million to 1.5 billion dinars, industry experts say.

A memorandum to potential global telecom operators detailing terms of the proposed sale will be officially launched in the coming few weeks, according to industry sources.

Delays have put back the final conclusion of the sale to the first half of 1998 from an earlier year end schedule.

British consultants Price Waterhouse, who have been reorganising the telecommunications sector since 1995, including making JTC more commercially driven, have evaluated its assets at 860 million dinars, according to global telecom experts.

Industry officials say that with investment, the telecoms sector in Jordan offers huge growth potential because the government has for years used the JTC as a cash cow to cushion state finances, rather than investing in it.

Jordan prepares for new economic and trade agreement with Russia

AMMAN (Petra) — The joint Jordanian-Russian economic committee will convene in Amman later this month for the conclusion of a new agreement on economic and trade relations between Jordan and the Russian Federation.

This was announced here Monday by Ministry of Industry Trade and Supply Secretary-General Mohammad Halaqa following a meeting attended by representatives of the various concerned departments and the private sector who will form the Jordanian side to the talks with the Russians.

Jordan, according to Dr. Halaqa, is linked with the former Soviet Union by a 1969 trade and economic cooperation agreement but the two sides are currently preparing to sign a new agreement which, he said, will encourage and promote investments and the endeavours of the private sector in promoting bilateral trade.

Dr. Halaqa said the new agreement will offer either side the most favoured nation treatment and will call for periodical meetings by the joint committee to review trade progress. He indicated that the two sides have prepared a draft accord on land transport between them, which he expects to be signed formally in Amman in December.

The Jordanian side will

also highlight higher education to secure 100 scholarships annually for Jordanian students in Russian universities and will discuss ways for promoting Russian tourists to come to Jordan, according to Dr. Halaqa.

He said the Jordanian side will explore the possibility of involving Russian firms in constructing railways in Jordan and training Jordanians on building railways and creating a railways maintenance centre in the Kingdom.

According to Dr. Halaqa Jordan is seeking Russian expertise in exploiting oil shale to produce energy and will discuss the prospect of creating a joint trading company to market Jordanian goods in Russian markets.

Amman will also seek to establish a Jordanian-Russian business council and to organise a Jordanian investment seminar in Moscow to promote the sale of Jordanian goods in Russia.

He said the balance of trade is in favour of Russia which sold Jordan JD36.3 million worth of goods last year of imported only JD4.6 million worth of Jordanian products. He said the balance of trade is in favour of Russia which sold Jordan JD36.3 million worth of goods last year and imported only JD4.6 million worth of Jordanian products.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 20/10/97 18:07

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	FRF	ITL	YEN	DM	DM	DM
US Dollar	1.0000	0.6312	1.4710	121.51	1.3849	172.20	1.9948	5.3360	
DE Mark	0.5845	1.7714	0.3458	0.8306	68.51	0.7814	0.7512	1.1267	3.3518
GB Sterling	1.6308	2.8898	0.2995	197.74	2.2585	281.98	3.2538	9.8804	
CH Franc	0.6789	120.35	0.4163	82.44	0.5408	1174.73	138.38	4.0325	
JP Yen	0.0082	1.4596	0.5048	1.2118	1.1409	14.23	184.41	4.8821	
CA Dollar	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	0.7221	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0254	0.3547	0.0852	1425.72	0.9015	11.55	3.4352	
NL Guilder	0.5013	88.72	0.3089	72.72	80.73	0.9338	864.85	2.3727	
FR Franc	0.1685	0.2981	0.1031	24.7569	20.40	0.2330	33.58	33.5800	

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	FRF	ITL	YEN	DM	DM	DM
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6398	0.3040	3.6729	1538.50	3.3875
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	0.9080	5.2972	0.5325	5.1410	0.4284	5.1477	2170.20	4.7886
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.1888	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	409.69	0.9032	
Bahraini Dinar	2.85	1.8780	0.9489	0.95	0.8064	8.74	4075.76	0.9898	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	0.0835	1.01	422.14	0.9307	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2995	2.3099	12.3368	1.2401	1.1497	12.08	5054.28	0.9307	
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0226	0.9910	0.0828	418.33	0.9223	
Lebanese 1000	0.85	0.4808	2.4408	0.2454	2.8689	0.1979	2.3904	2.2047	
Egyptian	0.2952	0.2090	1.1071	0.1113	1.0745	0.0897	1.0843	453.58	

Mid-Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	FRF	ITL	YEN	DM	DM	DM
SA Riyal	0.2688	0.1888	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	409.69	0.9032	
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0226	0.9910	0.0828	418.33	0.9223	
KW Dinar	3.2995	2.3099	12.3368	1.2401	1.1497	12.08	5054.28	0.9307	
BH Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0226	0.9910	0.0828	418.33	0.9223	
CY Pound	0.9133	3.3888	1.1724	2.8142	231.967				

Energy

Oil	Crude	Refined	Gas	Coal	Electricity
Brant	19.28	19.59			
WTI	20.59	20.35			
Bonny	19.28	19.59			
Dubai	18.73	18.69			
UL Gas	201.00	200.00			

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	FRF	ITL	YEN	DM	DM	DM
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1434	1.1481							
DE Mark	0.3996	0.4016							
CH Franc	0.4796	0.482							
FR Franc	0.1192	0.1198							
JP Yen	0.5857	0.5886							
NL Guilder	0.3545	0.3563							
IT Lira	0.4085	0.4105							

Source: Central Bank of Jordan

Main Equity Indices

Index	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change
New York	DOW JONES	7849.73	2.7	0.03	7888.4	7815.5	7847.03			
New York	S&P 500	946.6	9.44	0.47	955.22	931.58	946.25			
London	FT-SE 100	5212.2	-58.9	-1.12	0	0	5271.1			
Frankfurt	DAX	4061.5	-56.72	-1.38	4108.43	4048.33	4118.22			

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN SHARE LIST FOR MONDAY 20/10/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	* NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW										SHARES
						JD					
	346,000	242,500	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	3	60	19880	330.00	331.00	1.00+
N	2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	27	30150	55777	1.85	1.84	-0.01
	3,600	2,760	BANK OF JORDAN	6.2	0.00	2	544	1603	3.00	2.95	-0.05
	2,600	2,130	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.1	6.23	5	1850	3943	2.55	2.54	-0.01
	5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.50	4	6134	30543	4.98	4.98	0.00
	4,180	2,440	JOR. KUNAFI BANK	10.9	0.00	1	5000	1535	3.12	3.07	-0.05
	1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.5	9.21	1	1000	1520	1.76	1.76	0.00
	3,870	3,450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	19.1	0.00	2	10000	39700	3.78	3.97	0.19+
T	4,050	3,520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.3	3.42	7	1777	6247	3.55	3.51	-0.04
+	3,900	3,080	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	24.7	0.00	1	100	385	3.85	3.85	0.00
	1,950	1,560	BEIT AL-HAN (BEITHA)	6	16.30	3	400	365	0.88	0.92	0.04+
+	5,150	3,650	ARAB BANKING CO.	17.2	0.00	2	220	785	3.75	3.57	-0.18

BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 237.13 %CHG: +0.12 58 53435 162283

2,100 1,590 JOR. FRENCH INSUR. 5.3 7.94 3 2000 3763 1.92 1.89 -0.03-

INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.51 %CHG: -0.16 3 2000 3763

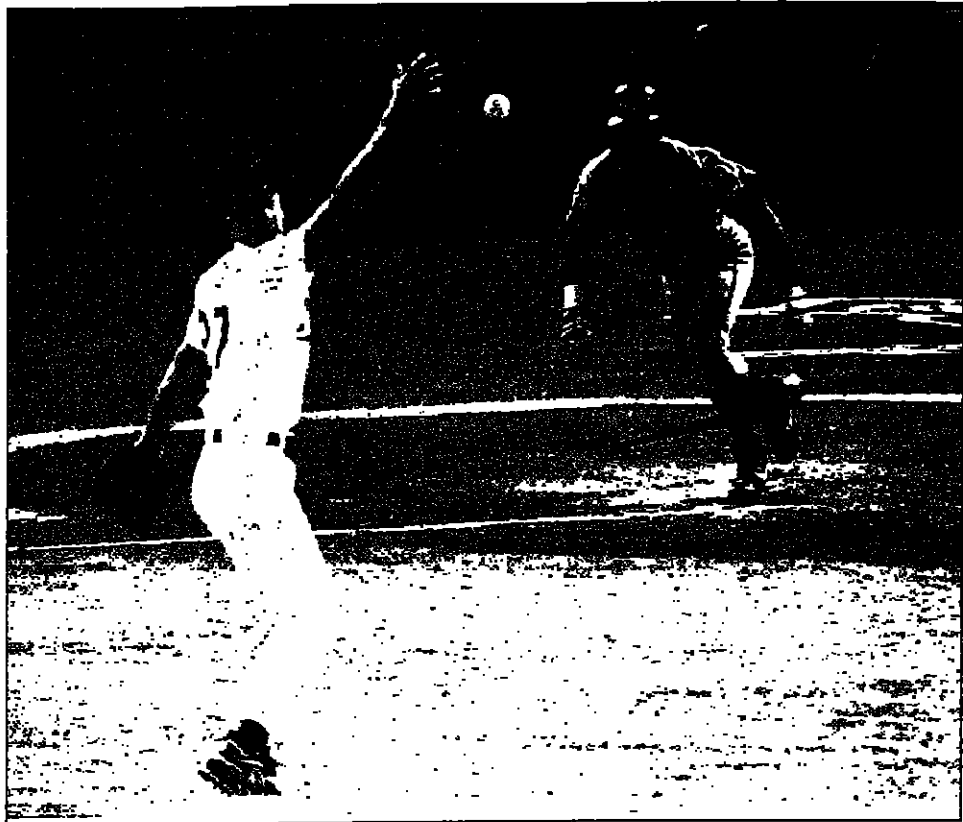
2,080	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.0	5.35	29	16950	31563	1.87	1.87	-0.05
4,010	1,320	URID ELECTRICITY	22.6	0.03	4	1050	3990	3.85	3.80	-0.05
7,500	6,000	VEELS. OWNERS FED.	7.7	5.00	1	1200	8400	7.01	7.00	-0.01
3,050	2,300	SHIPPING LINES	15.1	5.00	2	193	499	2.65	2.60	-0.05
3,720	2,890	ARAB TEL. INV. EDUC.	9.8	0.00	32	9850	3722	3.69	3.80	0.11+
1,150	900	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	7	4000	3680	0.92	0.92	0.00
950	640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	3000	2220	0.75	0.74	-0.01

SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 111.47 %CHG: +0.42 78 36243 87577

4,480	3,030	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.2	3.49	63	47125	1443419	3.07	3.15	0.08+
7,050	5,450	ARAB POTASS	14.0	3.33	1	200	1200	6.00	6.00	0.00
11,140	9,070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.8	8.00	16	1262	14044	11.14	11.11	-0.03
1,410	1,050	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	9.2	9.43	1	2000	2120	1.06	1.06	0.00
3,260	1,480	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	9	0.00	8	1000	1432	1.48	1.41	-0.07
4,700	3,040	ARAB PEARM. MANF.	11.9	4.62	35	19000	82528	4.36	4.33	-0.03
1,760	1,140	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	13.9	7.14	1	250	280	1.14	1.12	-0.02
1,480	1,050	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	1450	1813	1.19	1.25	0.06+
6,000	4,300	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	14.0	4.39	9	6300	35804	5.60	5.70	0.10+
3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.9	10.00	1	250	625	2.50	2.50	0.00
710	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.6	0.00	2	2250	1128	0.50	0.50	0.00
770	510	NATIONAL TILES	9	0.00	1	1000	565	0.56	0.57	0.01+
1,200	510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	250	135	0.54	0.54	0.00
890	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	1	50	34	0.68	0.68	0.00
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	16.7	5.34	11	5000	649	1.20	1.21	0.01+
1,400	630	AMMAN INVEST	40.1	0.00	2	200	123	0.62	0.61	-0.01
1,460	890	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	12.0	11.24	2	450	401	0.90	0.89	-0.01

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.29 %CHG: +0.42 173 516712 1595563

GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 170.54 %CHG: +0.24 312 608390 1849186



Florida Marlins pitcher Kevin Brown can not reach a ball that falls for a single by Cleveland Indians second baseman Bip Roberts that scores two runs in the 5th inning of the second game of the World Series. Brown's single drove in teammates Sandy Alomar Jr. and Marquis Grissom (Reuters photo)

Indians even Series

MIAMI (AFP) — Cleveland's comeback kings thrived under adversity once more, pounding out 14 hits to beat the Florida Marlins and pull even in the World Series.

Puerto Rico's Sandy Alomar slammed a two-run home run. Bip Roberts added a two-run single and Marquis Grissom had three hits in a 6-1 rout of the Marlins here Sunday, leveling the final at one triumph each.

The Indians, underdogs throughout the playoffs, have lost the opener in all three post-season matchups this month. But in each case they rallied with a road triumph in the second game and went on to victory.

"We play better under pressure," Cleveland's Omar Vizquel said. "I think it makes us a better team."

Cleveland manager Mike Hargrove would prefer less stressful starts.

"I don't think it's any confidence to us. We don't try to do it," Hargrove said. "But we know how far we have come against what odds this year already."

"We've gotten where we are by believing in each other. By believing, we stay focused and directed, concentrated on what we're doing. Then we have a chance for our talent to get us where we want to be."

Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship final shifts from this warm vacation haven to chilly Cleveland for three games starting Tuesday, when Florida's Al Leiter pitches against Charlie Nagy.

The Indians tagged Florida's winningest pitcher, Kevin Brown, with the loss, pounding 10 of their 14 hits against him. Brown lost for the first time since July 27, having gone 9-0 in 14 starts since.

"He wasn't in sync," Marlins manager Jim Leyland said. "When you're a sinker-ball pitcher, you live and die with ground balls. When they hit it at somebody it's great. When they find the holes it can be a long night."

Grissom's three singles extended his Series hit streak to 14 games and lifting his career Series batting average to .441 — the

most of any Series player who has batted 50 times or more.

Grissom's hit streak matches the late Puerto Rican star Roberto Clemente as the second-longest in Series history, trailing only the 17 in a row by Hank Bauer of the New York Yankees from 1956-1958.

"I didn't come here to set or tie records," Grissom said. "I came here to win."

Roberts hit a two-out, two-run single up the middle and Grissom hit a run-scoring single to put Cleveland ahead 4-1 in the fifth inning.

Alomar and Matt Williams singled to set up the big inning. Grissom brought home Williams from second and winning pitcher Chad Ogea advanced the runners with a sacrifice, setting the stage for Roberts' key hit.

After allowing their most runs in any playoff inning, the Marlins gave up two more in the sixth on the blast to left field by Alomar.

Williams, who snapped a slump with two hits, beat a throw to first base to break up a double play to extend the sixth inning long enough to bring Alomar to bat.

Venezuelan Omar Vizquel and Dominican Tony Fernandez each added two hits for the Indians, who ripped the Florida ace on his home field.

"It was obvious Kevin was not on top of his game," Hargrove said. "He was searching for his sinker."

Both clubs scored in the first inning. David Justice singled home Vizquel while Jeff Conine singled home Colombian Edgar Renteria with Florida's lone run.

"We had a few chances to get back into it with one hit but we never could get that one big hit," Marlins manager Jim Leyland said. "Ogea made some great pitches when he had to."

Ogea missed 2 1/2 months with shoulder and knee injuries and was in the minor leagues two months ago, but responded to the challenge by scattering seven hits over 6 2/3 innings.

Irvine key to Ferrari success

ROME (AFP) — Ferrari team chief Jean Todt said on Monday that Michael Schumacher's chance to win the world title this weekend was all down to his teammate Eddie Irvine.

Ferrari are working flat out to help Schumacher protect his one point lead over Williams rival Jacques Villeneuve, as they head into this weekend's last race of the season at Jerez in Spain.

"This is a very important week. We can't work miracles, even though we are preparing really well for this last race," Todt said.

"However, it would be a mistake to start celebrating now, before we know the final result."

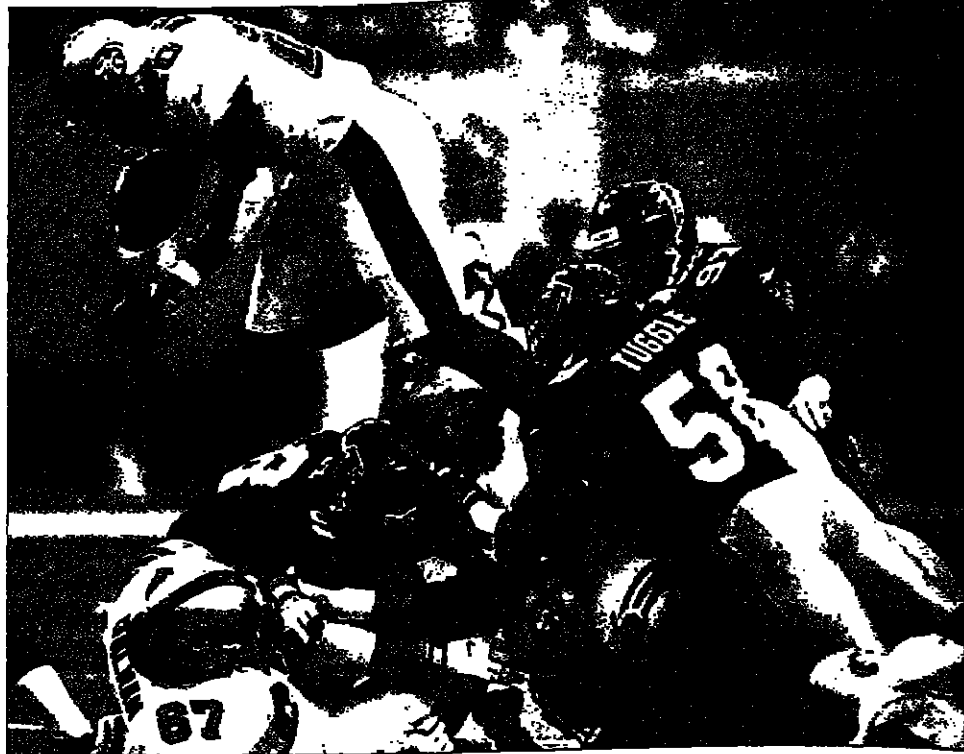
The Frenchman, speaking on Italian radio, then singled out Schumacher's Ulster teammate for special praise.

"A tribute has to go to Irvine," Todt explained, "because if we're in this situation now, it's thanks to him and the fantastic race he drove at Suzuka."

Irvine guided Schumacher into first place in Japan, sacrificing his race lead to put the German in line for his third world title.

Though most of Ferrari's energies are devoted to the last act of the 1997 season, Todt also revealed that their new car for the 1998 world championship would be ready by the end of the year.

Todt said: "We're hoping that the new car will be able to race in practice before Christmas."



San Francisco 49ers running back Garrison Hearst runs over the top of the Atlanta Falcons defensive line for a first down in second quarter action at the Georgia Dome (Reuters photo)

Napoleon conquers Denver

OAKLAND (AFP) — Napoleon Kaufman rushed for a career-high 217 yards as the Oakland Raiders defeated Denver 28-25, ending the Broncos' reign as the last unbeaten team in the National Football League.

Kaufman's 83-yard touchdown run with 7:54 left gave the Raiders a 28-17 lead, and even fourth-quarter comeback king John Elway couldn't bring the Broncos back.

The win snapped Oakland's four-game losing streak against their longtime AFC West rivals.

Kaufman took the spotlight from the NFL's second-leading rusher, Terrell Davis, who had two touchdowns but could not prevent the Broncos (6-1) from failing to earn the best start in franchise history.

Kaufman, who was limited to a season-low 13 yards rushing in his last outing, had eclipsed the team record of 221 rushing yards set by Bo Jackson against Seattle in 1987. He had 226 late in the game but lost yardage on carries in the Raiders' final possessions.

Kaufman rushed for 117 yards in the first half as Oakland built a 14-10 lead behind two touchdowns passes from Jeff George.

Denver took a 17-14 lead midway through the third quarter on a four-yard run by Davis and drove deep into Oakland territory later in the period. But Elway scrambled and was drilled from behind by defensive lineman Lance Johnstone, forcing a fumble. Safety Eric Turner scooped it up and rumbled 65 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown to put the Raiders ahead, 21-17, with 2:15 left in the third.

Following Kaufman's TD, Elway found Ed McCaffrey for a 29-yard scoring strike with 2:15 to go and Davis ran in the two-point conversion to pull the Broncos within three. But Denver was unable to get the ball back, as George hit Tim Brown with a long completion for a first down which allowed the Raiders to run out the clock. The New York Jets avenged a heartbreaking loss at New England with a 24-19 victory over the Patriots.

The rivalry between the AFC East teams has dramatically intensified since coach Bill Parcells' bitter split with the Patriots, the team he took to the Super Bowl last season.

The defeat ended the Patriots' nine-game winning streak against division opponents, and left them tied for the AFC East lead with Miami, who defeated the Baltimore Ravens 24-13.

The New York Giants claimed the lead in the NFC East for the first time since December of 1993 with a 26-20 overtime victory over Detroit.

NFC East rivals Dallas avoided their first three-game losing streak since

Sports

Schools C

Zeina Sha'

table tennis

EUROPEAN UNION

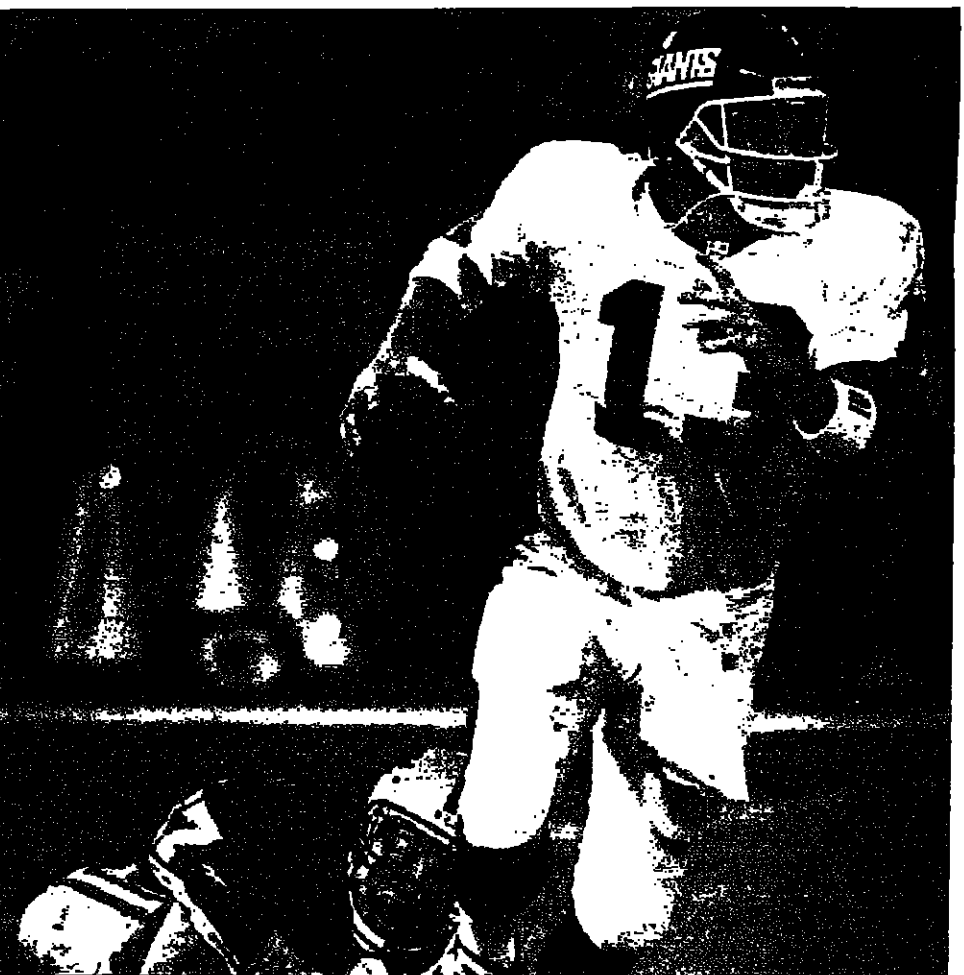
NEW FURNISHED FLAT FOR RENT

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Marketing/Administration Employee Required

Box 1126 Amman 11111

952 6 687223



New York Giants' quarterback Danny Kanell (R) breaks away from Detroit Lions' linebacker Stephen Boyd (L) as he looks for an open receiver during play in the second quarter of the NFL game at the Pontiac Silverdome (Reuters photo)

'For sale' sign hangs over World Series

MIAMI (AFP) — Critics charged Wayne Huizenga with buying a title when the Florida Marlins owner spent \$90 million on free agents to improve his franchise expansion club.

Now that the Marlins have reached the World Series, the billionaire is selling them to the highest bidder.

A "For Sale" sign hangs over the National League champions as they face Cleveland in the best-of-seven Major League Baseball final.

The Marlins will lose \$30 million this season. But weep not for Huizenga, a billionaire whose video rental stores have helped him buy American football's Miami Dolphins and hockey's Florida Panthers as well.

Sympathy should go to a region that led baseball in attendance gain with 617,620 more fans than in 1996. They lifted atten-

dance from \$1.74 million to \$2.36 million only for Huizenga to say it was not good enough.

"It's like drinking at an empty bar," Huizenga said of 30,000 tarp-covered empty seats at most games.

"We got 600,000 more fans. But a lot of those are 10 bucks a head because they're in the cheaper seats. That's about \$6 million and we raised our payroll \$20 million. Obviously we didn't get a return on our investment."

"But hey, we did because we're in the World Series. That's my gift to South Florida, so to speak. You could say I did buy a championship."

Now after hooking the public, Huizenga is fishing for a publicly financed new \$250 million stadium with a retracting dome in order not to sell the Marlins, possibly to a group that would move the club.

"The Marlins had to be

more of a business than the Dolphins because we're losing our a... here," Huizenga said.

"If you have a new field, you can compete. We can't sell out. I wrote big checks to try and create the interest in baseball to see if it would work here and it didn't work."

Huizenga knows better. Fans filled 66,000 seats for the Series opener here and regular season crowds were higher by 7,500 people a game.

Huizenga also tells local and out-of-town reporters different tales.

"We're not changing our mind," visitors hear. "Nothing has changed except a lot of business people and politicians are calling me. They say don't be hasty."

But to Miami media, whose words are aimed at the public he wants to woo, the message is milder.

"I really don't know what

we're going to do," Huizenga said. "Maybe we will keep the team. Maybe we will change our mind. Maybe we will try to figure out something else."

Huizenga would make a profit on any sale because the teams value has skyrocketed, even as a money loser. But a move from here might make fans mad enough to stop watching his other clubs or videotapes.

So he portrays himself as a needy, not greedy, owner.

"I don't believe anyone will build a new stadium as long as Wayne Huizenga is attached to the team, based on the media saying we shouldn't give a stadium to a billionaire," he said. "I don't want the fact I'm a billionaire to hurt the Marlins."

The team would not be hurt no matter who pays the salaries but the area would divert money for schools, roads and social

services into a stadium whose revenues would go into Huizenga's pockets.

Such is the price of civic pride, for Huizenga has made it clear that he will spend nothing on a new stadium.

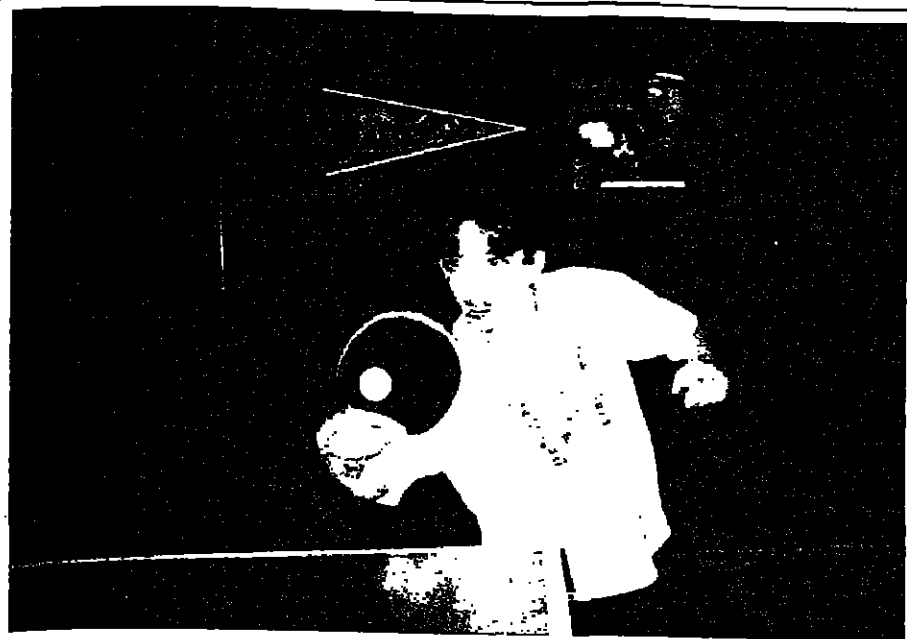
"We've spent a lot already," he said. "If we got the stadium only half paid for, we're still at a disadvantage. We have to have a (\$50 million) payroll similar to the other contenders."

"You can't compete without a big payroll. The only way to compete is with a new stadium."

As a result, uncertainty hangs over the Marlins as they fight for a title. General manager Dave Dombrowski shrugs over the situation, saying, "I don't know what's going to happen. That's all on the back burner."

Win or lose, the heat gets turned up in another week.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	TEL: 634144	TEL: 634144	TEL: 699238	TEL: 677420	TEL: 079 33430	TEL: 079 33430	TEL: 625155
	Kurt Russell ... in	Tom Cruise ... in	Tommy Lee Jones & Will Smith ... in	Geena Davis & Samuel Jackson ... in	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	Watch out for the new play
	ESCAPE FROM L.A.	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	MEN IN BLACK	THE LONG KISS GOOD NIGHT	Nicholas Cage ... in	Tim Allen... in	THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	(12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30)	CON AIR	JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE	Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
				TOO HOT TO HANDLE	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	
				Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only			



Promising table tennis star Zeina Sha'ban (file photo)

Jordan Schools Championship Zeina Sha'ban wins table tennis title

By Omar Karim
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — Nine-year old Zeina Sha'ban fulfilled some of her enormous potential here, when she won the Jordan National School's Championship in table tennis.

In front of, amongst others, Minister for Education Hassan Ala Edin, she beat her opponent in the final, Mervat Saqr (Salt), in straight sets 21-8, 21-13.

Zeina, by far the youngest player in the tournament, and certainly the youngest ever to have reached and won the final without dropping a set. However, Zeina's fiercest competitors — Lina El-Majdalawi, whom she lost to in the semi-final of last week's Amman Private School's tournament, and Hadil Awad, whom she lost to in the Under-12 final

— were both missing. Zeina's father, Mohammad Sha'ban, was nevertheless unperturbed: "Although Hadil and Lina were missing I think this is a remarkable achievement for someone so young, and I'm very happy for Zeina, that her hard work has paid off."

Zeina is no stranger to winning high-profile competitions, already being the U.S. Open Under-10's champion. The Jordan National School's Championship, however, is special in that it has no age distinction, which makes Zeina's victory all the more remarkable.

"We may even be looking at a world record," enthused Mr. Sha'ban. Confirmation for this has to come from the ITTF (International Table Tennis Federation). Fingers crossed!

China denies drug role in new swimming records

SHANGHAI (AFP) — China's sports authorities have launched a pre-emptive strike against any resurgence of drug accusations after the world record breaking performances of their swimmers at the National Games here.

Guo Qinglong, president of the Chinese Swimming Association, insisted the success of the past decade had come from hard work and not doping.

In a spectacular swimming competition at the National Games, Chen Yan set a new women's 400m individual medley record, the oldest in swimming, and Wu Yanyan

smashed the 200m individual medley. Nine Asian records were also beaten.

China's previous success this decade collapsed in scandal after multiple drug failures.

Chinese women swimmers took 12 of the 16 titles at the 1994 world championships in Rome. But seven swimmers were among 11 Chinese to fail drug tests at the Hiroshima Asian Games later the same year.

After more than two years of self-imposed exile, the performances of 16-year-old Chen and Wu, another teenager, proved that China will be a major force at the next world

championships in Perth in January and the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

But not all international coaches are convinced that Chinese sport is still completely clean. Though no major swimming competitors have failed tests, there have still been cases in China.

The swimming association president insisted at a press conference here late Sunday that such claims were "fabricated rumours."

"China will, as always, support the anti-doping campaign. Any athletes who used banned drugs to enhance their performance will be severely punished."

Guo said specially-trained coaches were behind the dozens of Olympic and world champions to come out of China in the past decade.

"We must look forward and aim at the World Swimming Championships in January in Perth, Australia, and even the Olympic Games in the year of 2000."

"We must continue to learn from other countries," he said. "It's imperative for us to keep our eyes open at all time."

Jordan Football Association signs sponsorship agreement with L.G. Electronics

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) and L.G. Electronics Monday signed an agreement whereby players from the Kingdom's top Premier League teams will meet L.G.'s team from Korea on Nov. 14.

The company which earlier in the year sponsored the Federation Shield match, will sponsor the match and also offer prizes to fans attending the match.

JFA secretary Mohammad Hamdan announced that fans will be admitted to the match free of charge and that 40 lottery prizes would be awarded to attendees.

The L.G. Cheetahs team includes five professional players. The team has visited Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Kuwait and will soon play in Iran.

JFA vice-president Saleh Irshiedat said the match will be held as part of the Kingdom's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday. He expressed the JFA's appreciation of

L.G.'s support which indicates the strong ties between Jordan and Korea.

Fans attending the match will also enjoy a taekwondo display and a show by footballer Huh Nam-Jin, a record holder in the Guinness book of records.

Monday's agreement also stipulates that L.G. will offer a television and VCR to each Premier League club as well as the sports media Federation and the JFA.

Mohammad Ali boxing memorabilia a knockout in auction

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The elaborate robe that Muhammad Ali wore into the ring against George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire in 1974 fetched \$156,500 in an auction of Ali memorabilia at Christie's here Sunday.

Crowds at the auction house in Beverly Hills cheered like fight fans as the intricately detailed black and white robe reached its price, an auction record for boxing memorabilia.

A total of \$1,321,905 was realized for the sale of more than 3,000 items relating to the career and life of the boxing legend. The sale was 93 per cent sold by dollar and 90 per cent sold by lot.

The buyer of the robe was described by Christie's as a software entrepreneur who chose to remain anonymous.

"I'm very pleased to have won the 'Rumble on Rodeo,'" a statement from the new owner released by Christie's said. "It's my family's desire to work with Mr. Ali and his family to find ways to share this important piece of boxing history with Ali fans around the world, and to benefit causes which he supports."

"More than his unequalled boxing talents I respect his courage and

integrity," the new owner said. "He captured the imagination of the world and has inspired and touched the lives of people of all races, nationalities and beliefs. I'm a great fan of Muhammad Ali the fighter and Muhammad Ali the man."

Ali himself did not benefit from the sale. The collection was amassed over the course of about five years by American collector Ronnie Paloger.

As the auction approached, Ali complained that some of the items were taken without permission by members of his entourage. But Paloger said that Ali and his family had seen most of the items on display in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, and had not challenged his ownership.

The Zaire robe included a recently discovered silk handkerchief bearing an astrological prediction that Ali would win the fight, which was sewn into the hem.

A pair of boots and trunks worn by Ali during the same fight fetched \$59,000 and \$57,000 respectively.

Ali's 1966 letter to the National Director of Selective Services achieved \$63,000, a record for a boxing-related document.

In the six-page letter Ali

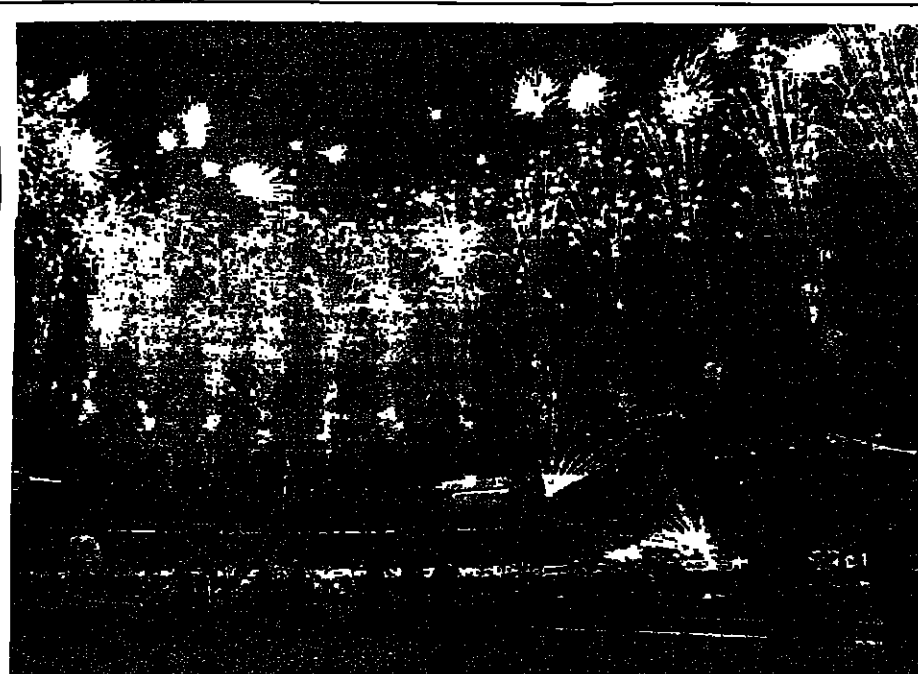
requested exemption from the Vietnam War draft on the basis of his religious beliefs.

His request was denied, and Ali was eventually found guilty of draft evasion and banned from the ring for more than three

years, until the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction.

"Muhammad Ali fans from around the world participated in today's auction," said an exuberant Don Flanagan, Christie's Senior Sports Specialist. "In addition to the top

lots, a large number of smaller items, such as photographs and posters, triggered tremendous bidding activity. The enthusiastic response worldwide to this auction clearly confirms the tremendous affection and esteem fans feel toward Mr. Ali."



Fireworks explode over the Senayan stadium in Jakarta during the closing ceremony of the South East Asian games. The biannual event, in which 10 regional countries participated ended today, the next time to be held in the tiny state of Brunei in 1999 (Reuters photo)

EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the EC in Amman has a vacancy for a high level Executive Secretary for the Head of Delegation.

Qualification required:

- Fluent in English, Arabic & French.
- Minimum 10 years experience.
- Good computer skills (Excel, Windows).
- Pleasant personality.
- Contract for one year (renewable).

If interested please deliver your CV to the Delegation's offices in Shmeisani Tel. 668191 & ask for Mrs. S. Daniel.

Deadline for submission of CVs is 30.10.1997 All applications will be treated confidentially.

NEW FURNISHED FLAT FOR RENT

Ground floor in Jabal Amman, 5th Circle. Consists of 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, salon, central heating, terrace, garden, garage, satellite, telephone and fax.

For information, call Tel.: 701140

TWO FURNISHED APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Located at the 4th Circle, opposite the Prime Ministry. Consists of 2 & 3 bed flats. Deluxe furniture. All services available.

Call: 777916, 674935 or Mobile: 079/39010

Marketing/Administration Employee Required

Ambitious Jordanian in marketing/administration post in Amman. Applicants should be university graduates, fluent in English with computer skills. Priority to business graduates and car owners. Please send your CV to:

P.O. Box 1120 Amman 11118 or Fax: 962 6 687323

JORDAN TIMES

TEL:

699634,
684311

Ballet Lessons



British Ballet Organization
Syllabus

At Power Hut

Direct 079/68957 after 2 p.m. or 686349

BUILDING FOR RENT



Consists of three floors. Each 240 sq.m. office area plus seven stores of different sizes. Location: Sweifiyeh, parallel to main street of 6th & 7th Circles.

Please call: 832296 after 9 p.m.

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO. LTD.,

ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO TENDER No. 48F/97

JPMC announces the invitation to bid No. 48F/97 for the supply of:
(High voltage electric motor (6.6 KV) Qty: One unit)

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. Local time Thursday 6th November, 1997. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD(25) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours, local time Tuesday 18th November 1997.

Sameh Madani,
Managing Director

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO. LTD.,

REANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO TENDER No. 42F/97

JPMC reannounces the invitation to bid No. 42F/97 for the supply of:
(20,000 metric tonnes of porous prilled ammonium nitrate)

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman Supply Department. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD(200) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours, local time Saturday 1st November 1997.

Sameh Madani,
Managing Director

Jewish extremists arrested trying to enter Al Aqsa Mosque compound

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli police detained five Jewish extremists Monday when they tried to pray in the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Arab east Jerusalem to mark a Jewish holiday, witnesses said.

The five, all members of the radical Hei Vekayam movement, were dragged away by police after trying to force their way into the mosque compound located in Arab east Jerusalem's Old City.

The compound comprising Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock is the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina and some claim it is built on the site of the Jewish temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Jews call the site the Temple Mount.

Also on Monday members of another radical Jewish group, the Temple Mount

Faithful, held a ceremony presenting the cornerstone of a new temple they want to build on the site of Al Aqsa.

The Jewish fundamentalists brought the stone on a truck bed to the Arab neighbourhood of Silwan, below the walls of Al Aqsa, and ritually covered it with water drawn from a nearby spring believed to be located at the site of the first Jewish capital founded by King David.

The militant demonstrations coincided with a Jewish holiday known as the blessing of the Cohens, descendants of the priests who officiated in the ancient temple.

Thousands of members of the priestly clan congregated at the Western Wall, believed to be the last remnant of the original temple which now forms part of the foundation of the raised Al Aqsa compound, for ceremonies blessing the people of Israel.



Israeli police arrest one of the Jewish extremists who tried to enter the Aqsa Mosque compound, in Arab east Jerusalem's Old City Monday (AFP photo)

Israel has occupied Arab east Jerusalem since 1967. Police have barred Jews from praying in the mosque compound for fear of violent Muslim reaction.

Most rabbis also say entry into the mosque compound is forbidden to Jews because they could inadvertently come into contact with the "holy of holies" — the former central chamber of the temple which can be entered only by high priests after ritual purification.

Israeli radical who killed seven Arabs let out of prison for day

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Jewish extremist serving the seventh year of a life sentence for killing seven Palestinians was let out of prison Monday for a 12-hour furlough, the Israeli news agency, Itim, reported.

Ami Popper was condemned to seven life terms in 1990 for murdering seven Palestinian labourers in a shooting spree outside Tel Aviv. Popper claimed he committed the slayings because he was sexually assaulted as a youth by an Arab.

It was the first time Popper has been let out of jail and Itim quoted the

director of the Ayalon prison where he is being held outside Tel Aviv as saying authorities planned to grant him regular furloughs in future.

Itim said Popper left the Ayalon prison dressed in the black suit worn by ultra-Orthodox Jews and was met by a rabbi.

The spokesman for Israel's prison authority was not immediately available to comment on the report.

spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin.

Last week authorities announced they would next month release Allen Goodman, a Jewish-American extremist who killed a Palestinian religious official in a shooting attack at Al Aqsa Mosque in Arab east Jerusalem in 1982.

Since Sheikh Yassin's release, Israel has also freed two men involved in a grenade attack in Arab east Jerusalem's Old City which killed one man and has lightened the sentences of four other Jewish fundamentalists jailed for killing Arabs.

Saudi authorities raid shops, homes in massive illegal alien crackdown

JEDDAH (R) — Saudi authorities are raiding businesses and housing blocks in a crackdown on illegal foreign workers after a grace period for their departure expired, diplomats and newspapers said on Monday.

Across the desert kingdom, police are also erecting roadblocks and checking the documents of foreigners in a bid to catch unlawful expatriate labourers.

But while the amnesty allowing aliens to leave Saudi Arabia expired on Friday, diplomats said thousands were stuck in the kingdom because they had not received the necessary travel permits.

"A special team of officers has been formed which will conduct raids on commercial establishments, industrial outfits and other business locations," the daily Arab News said.

Police say they are rounding up illegal aliens across the country, where foreigners — mostly from India, Southeast Asia, and poorer

Arab states — make up one third of the 18 million population. There are 1.4 million Indians alone.

Saudi officials had said the sweep for illegal workers would not include those who obtained required documents but were still waiting for available transport out of the country.

Through the three-month amnesty, Saudi Arabia hoped to flush out more than 100,000 illegal labourers. The same number of illegal aliens left during a similar operation in 1995.

"We are surely going to nab these people," Brigadier General Abdul Aziz Al Mulhim, head of a deportation centre in eastern Saudi Arabia, was quoted by Arab News as saying.

The oil-rich kingdom has warned people sheltering illegal workers they could also face jail terms of up to six months and a (\$26,000) fine.

About 40,000 Indians, 30,000 Sudanese, 10,000 Nigerians, and thousands of other nationalities including Arabs, Pakistanis, Sri

Lankans and Filipinos, have taken advantage of the amnesty.

But many remain stranded in the kingdom, huddling at deportation centres, ports and airports.

"The number is quite substantial," Indian Ambassador Mohammad Ansari told Reuters. "I would say we are talking about thousands (of stranded Indians)."

Foreign labourers must secure travel documents from their embassies and Saudi exit permits before they may leave the country, a process diplomats say can take more than two weeks.

In Jeddah, where the bulk of overstayers from pilgrimages are, the government is using a transit camp for pilgrims near the port to keep these people since Oct. 13. It has a capacity of about 15,000 people," Mr. Ansari said.

"In Riyadh there is no such facility and the people are just about anywhere," he said.

While some of the illegal aliens are pilgrims to the

Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina who stayed longer than their visas allowed, many come in on valid work and residence visas.

They pay Saudi sponsors for the chance to come to the kingdom seeking work. They then find a job or start their own businesses, often paying their original sponsors a monthly fee.

Others illegally quit jobs with their sponsors for higher wages elsewhere, or because of disputes with their bosses. Some sponsors do not bother to renew workers' papers, diplomats said.

Newspapers said Jeddah's Islamic port and the city's airport were swamped with overstayers searching for a boat or plane out of the country.

Airlines have scheduled additional flights to take the workers back home and the Saudi government had also chartered several ships to deport illegal aliens, Mr. Ansari said.

Families of convicted nurses in S. Arabia visit them in prison

DUBAI (R) — Relatives of two British nurses charged with murder in Saudi Arabia have visited the women in jail for the past three days and will return to Britain on Monday evening, a British embassy spokesman in Riyadh said.

"The family members visited the nurses on Saturday, Sunday and today [Monday]," he told Reuters. The nurses are being held at a women's prison in Dammam, eastern Saudi Arabia.

Stan and Ann McLauchlan, parents of 31-year-old Lucille McLauchlan, and Sandra and Jonathan Ashbee, the sister and brother-in-law of 38-year-old Deborah Parry, arrived on Friday on one of their many trips to Saudi Arabia to see the women.

McLauchlan has been found guilty of being an

accomplice to the murder of Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford in December and faces eight years in jail and 500 lashes. Parry is still awaiting a verdict.

The spokesman said the embassy had not yet been notified of a date for the next hearing in the case.

The Saudi ambassador to Britain, Ghazi Qasbi, said on Thursday Parry faced a moderate jail sentence rather than execution if she is found guilty since the victim's brother has waived his right to seek the death penalty.

Saudi Arabia applies strict Islamic law including beheading by the sword for convicted murderers, drug smugglers and rapists. But in murder cases the victim's family has the right to accept financial compensation and prevent an execution.

The envoy also said Frank Gilford's decision to spare Parry would allow the court to review the judgement already passed on her colleague.

The embassy spokesman said the document in which Gilford waived his right to demand execution was expected to be presented to the relevant authorities in Saudi Arabia this week.

Gilford, in exchange for \$1.2 million, on Wednesday waived his right to call for the death penalty if Parry is found guilty of murdering his sister.

Yvonne Gilford was found stabbed, bludgeoned and suffocated in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in the eastern city of Dhahran a few days ahead of her 56th birthday.

Israel remands suspect in U.S. murder

TEL AVIV (R) — An American teenager charged in the U.S. with a brutal kidnapping killing was remanded in an Israeli court Monday pending his extradition, an official spokesman said.

An Israeli court ordered Samuel Sheinbein, 17, held for 15 days after Israel's attorney-general ruled Sunday the teenager was not an Israeli citizen and could be returned to the U.S. to face trial.

The ruling and the remand were likely to ease tension between Israel and Washington, which has pressed hard for Sheinbein's return.

Sheinbein's attorney said his client would fight the extradition in a case that Israeli analysts said could last weeks or months.

"He was remanded for extradition for 15 days. His extradition hearing will be held in a district court but no date has been set," said court spokesman Moshe Gorali.

Attorney David Libai, a former justice minister who now represents Sheinbein, did not

object to the remand but insisted his client was an Israeli citizen.

"At this early stage I thought the remand request is appropriate but I didn't want my agreement to imply that we accept the ruling that he is not an Israeli citizen," Mr. Libai told reporters after the hearing, held behind closed doors.

Israel refuses by law to extradite its citizens to face trial in other countries.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had personally asked Israel to do all it could to hand over the suspect, who fled to the Jewish state in September. He is wanted for trial in the U.S. on charges of killing Alfred Tello, 19.

Tello's body was found burned and without arms and legs in Maryland. Local police suspect Sheinbein and another suspect killed him and sliced up his body with a circular saw, according to the Washington Post.

Sheinbein hoped he could claim Israeli citizenship, escape extradition, and

instead stand trial in Israel on the basis of his father having held Israeli citizenship.

Justice officials cited in Sunday's ruling the fact that the father left Israel in 1950 with the intention of settling in the U.S.

"We are basing this [decision to extradite Sheinbein] on evidence that points to the fact that the family emigrated from Israel in order to settle in the United States in 1950," said lawyer Nava Ben-Or of the state attorney's office after Monday's hearing.

Sheinbein was arrested in Israel on Sept. 28 and the justice ministry began its investigation into whether he was an Israeli citizen.

At one point, the chairman of the American House of Representatives committee that gives Israel \$3 billion a year in aid said he would consider holding back some of the money if Israel did not extradite Sheinbein.

If the district court rules the suspect can be extradited, Sheinbein can appeal the decision to the supreme court.

Yemeni government says it is confident British hostage will be released soon

SANAA (AFP) — The Yemeni authorities have assured the British embassy here that a kidnapped British aid worker will be released soon, an embassy spokesman said Monday.

Henry Thompson, a consultant in his late 30s working for the Japan International Corporation Agency, was kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen on Wednesday.

"He is still held by the Bani Dabian tribe," the spokesman said. "The interior ministry is communicating with the people who are holding him via tribal

intermediaries. They are confident there will be an early release."

Mr. Thompson "is in good health," the spokesman added. "A letter has reached us in which he says he is looked after and well fed."

Thompson, his Yemeni interpreter and his driver were captured 55 kilometres south of Sanaa on Wednesday by armed men from the Rashed Al Tam clan of the Bani Dabian tribe, and taken to a mountain hideaway nearby.

Some 120 armed Yemeni policemen have been

deployed in the area where the hostages are being held in a bid to pressure the gunmen into surrendering, police said.

The spokesman said, "We understand the tribe is asking for amenities such as a clinic, water supply and a road."

A tribal official told Agence France Presse the kidnappers wanted financial aid for the Bani Dabian tribe and were also demanding that the government complete electricity and water projects in the region.

He added that tribal offi-

cials, including the governor of Sanaa Sheikh Naji Al Sufi, were involved in mediation with the gunmen.

Yemeni tribesmen, who control vast areas of the country's rural interior, frequently kidnap foreign tourists to use as bargaining chips.

Since 1993, around 100 foreigners have been kidnapped in Yemen but all have been freed unharmed.

Mr. Thompson and the Yemenis were kidnapped the same day as four French tourists who were released Thursday in good health.

Shimon Peres, the incorrigible dreamer

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Setbacks to the peace process and political defeats have failed to dent the optimism of former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres, who continues to nourish his dream of a "New Middle East."

"I am going to dedicate myself to saving the peace process," the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize winner told Israeli radio ahead of the opening here on Monday of the Shimon Peres Centre for Peace.

At 74, Mr. Peres, one of the main architects of the peace process as Israel's foreign minister (1992-95) and then prime minister (1995-96), appears to have lost none of his dynamism or legendary appetite for work.

More than 100 dignitaries and diplomats from around the globe gathered here on Monday to signal their support for the beleaguered peace process by helping launch the peace centre.

In announcing plans for the

centre, Mr. Peres said the aim was to promote his goal of creating a "New Middle East" where peaceful relations are supported by joint economic development efforts.

To his detractors, who accuse him of chasing a mirage, Mr. Peres responds that investment, full employment and high-technology are more powerful weapons than those used by fanatics on both sides.

Ousted as Labour Party leader in June by Ehud Barak, Mr. Peres vehemently denies suggestions he still dreams of returning to power.

Mr. Peres also believes that his right-wing successor as prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, will fail in trying to turn back the clock.

"I am absolutely convinced that the New Middle East will see the light," he said. "The realities are stronger than the actions of the Israeli government."

Born in Poland in 1923, Mr. Peres emigrated to Palestine

at the age of 11 and joined the Zionist struggle in the 1940s.

He joined the Haganah, the Jewish army, but in an administrative position responsible for manpower and not in a fighting unit — a lack of combat experience his political adversaries would often use against him.

At 29, he became director-general of the defence ministry and is considered the founding father of Israel's military nuclear programme.

A talented organiser, writer and speaker, Mr. Peres quickly became a close adviser and protégé of David Ben Gurion, the founder of Israel.

A member of parliament since 1959, he headed the Labour party from 1977 until Yitzhak Rabin took over in 1992.

Mr. Peres became prime minister upon Rabin's assassination by a Jewish extremist in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4, 1995 and lost a close election to Mr. Netanyahu in May 1996.



Tamagotchi all right for Gentiles, but not for Jews

TEL AVIV (DPA) — A rabbi in Israel said Sunday that Jews should have nothing to do with the Tamagotchi virtual pet toy, newspapers reported. He called the toys "all right for Gentiles, but not for Jews."

The daily Maariv said the rabbi from Maskeret Batia believed that because the "pets" needed looking after all the time, they constituted in breach of the rules governing the Jewish Sabbath, the day when no work is permitted. In addition, the Tamagotchi is electrically powered and Jewish law forbids switching electricity on or off on the Sabbath. If parents nevertheless go ahead and buy the cyber-pet, it should be "boycotted" on the Sabbath, said the rabbi.

Failure to "give and receive same" worries imprisoned wife

PRETORIA (AFP) — A mother-of-three accused of leading a notorious crime syndicate has asked a South African supreme court for permission to have sex with her husband in jail so that she can bear another child, a newspaper reported. "I humbly submit that marriage is consummated by conjugal rights and submit that a failure to give and receive same, has a grave effect to a marriage," 40-year-old Julia Mashele said in a court statement. Julia Mashele has filed an unprecedented application to the Pretoria Supreme Court for conjugal rights with her husband, Mureneni, the weekly City Press reported.

Spice Girls' 4th No. 1 hit knocks down Elton's 'Candle in the Wind'

LONDON (AFP) — A new release by the Spice Girls has knocked Elton John's "Candle in the Wind" tribute to the Princess of Wales off the top of the British single charts after six weeks. The reworked version of Elton's song, recorded immediately after he sang it at Diana's funeral, is Britain's biggest-selling single ever, with sales nudging four million pounds. The Spice Girls' latest hit "Spice Up Your Life" makes them the first group ever to reach No. 1 with their first five singles and the first to enter the charts at No. 1 four times in a row.

Chinese women inclined towards polygamy

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese women would prefer to have several men in their life, according to a study published in the China Daily. "Most urban women and nearly half of rural women hold a negative attitude towards having only one man in their life," the English-language daily said quoting a study from the population research institute, linked to the Academy of Social Sciences. "China traditionally has been considered a country where the husband is paramount, giving the wife little power in decision-making on major family issues. However, drastic changes have occurred," it added.

Paris throws a parachute birthday party

PARIS (AFP) — A wave of parachutists will be dropped on central Paris on Wednesday, landing in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first ever parachute jump. Seventy-six flyers from all three armed services will be launched from transport planes to land on the Champs de Mars to mark the original feat by 28-year-old Frenchman Andre-Jacques Garnerin on Oct. 22, 1797. A plaque will also be unveiled Wednesday morning in the Parc Monceau.



WIPING CLEAN THE BOMB: A nuclear museum staffer Sunday cleans the first Soviet nuclear bomb, tested in 1949 in Sarov (behind sits the 1st thermonuclear bomb). Sarov, a town of some 84,000 inhabitants, surrounded by a tightly guarded no-man's-land with three barbed wire fences to keep the curious away from Russia's nuclear secrets, lies near the Volga city of Nizhny Novgorod, about 450 km east of Moscow (AFP photo)